



# IOS NEWSLETTER

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## Thought for the Month

O mankind! We created  
You from a single (pair)  
Of a male and a female  
Nations and tribes, that  
Ye may know each other  
(Not that ye may despise  
(Each other). Verily  
The most honoured of you  
In the sight of Allah  
Is (he who is) the most  
Righteous of you  
And Allah has full knowledge  
And is well-acquainted  
(With all things)  
Hearts which are  
In their breasts

Al-Quran- 49:13

### EDITOR

*Prof. Sanghasen Singh*

### CIRCULATION MANAGER

*Syed Arshad Karim*

### CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

162, Jogabai Extension  
Jamia Nagar, New Delhi  
PIN-110025  
India

Phone 26981187, 26989253,  
26987467  
Fax : 91-11-26981104

E-mail: [manzoor@ndf.vsnl.net.in](mailto:manzoor@ndf.vsnl.net.in)  
Website: [www.iosworld.org](http://www.iosworld.org)

## FOCUS

The mosque is the most visible Muslim institution, and the imam officiating in the mosque the most easily visible Muslim authority in Western Europe. The real importance and influence of imams has been much exaggerated, especially in the perception of European authorities. Especially in Germany and the Netherlands, with their tradition of moral leadership by church ministers, there has been a tendency to perceive imams as the Muslim equivalent of priests and ministers and to attribute to them pastoral functions that they usually do not have in the countries of origin. The imams were often considered to be the most appropriate and representative spokespersons for their communities (or even for all Turks, all Moroccans, etc.), and they became favourite targets for government programmes aiming the integration of Muslims. Interestingly, in neighbouring Belgium, where the Protestant church tradition is absent, imams were never given the same importance and it was teachers of religion in schools who were given the central role.

The very fact that European governments and non-governmental institutions took the imams more seriously than their societies of origin appears to have given the imams some extra leverage. To the extent that they became middleman in their own right and/or assumed pastoral functions-which very much depended on the individual imam's abilities-they gained some power vis-à-vis the board of the mosque association that employed them. Apart from some exceptional personalities who acquired a reputation for their learning or for taking a courageous political stand, most imams are in a precarious position that makes it hard for them to exert real authority.

Those who did reach positions of authority and/or engage in a wider range of activities than those associated with worship in the mosque often prefer other titles than that of imam. Thus the leading religious authority of the Great Mosque of Paris, Dali Boubakeur, styles himself '*recteur*' (rector) of the mosque, a title adopted by several others including Larbi Kechat (see Amiraux in this volume). Their positions are, it is true, significantly different from that of the simple prayer leaders also attached to the same mosque, who continue to be called imam; but another authority who is definitely in the same league with these '*recteurs*', Tareq Oubrou, emphatically takes pride in the title of imam. Turkish Muslims do not generally use the term imam (except in communicating with Europeans) but address the mosque official as '*hoca*' (teacher), a term that carries more respect. In Diyanet mosques, the imam is known by the appropriately bureaucratic title of '*din gorevlist*' (religious functionary), which implies a range of functions besides officiating at worship.

The reported research findings concerning the respect the imams enjoy in their own communities appear to be contradictory. On the one hand, educated informants frequently complain of the ignorance of most imams and the irrelevance of their *khutbas* (sermons) to the life-world of Muslims in Europe. The demand for a better imam education, more explicitly geared to European conditions, often comes from these circles (as well as, partially for other reasons, from European authorities, who believe that modern-educated imams are the keys to the social and cultural integration of Muslim communities in the wider society).

*Contd. on page-11*

## Activities of the IOS Headquarters

### International Seminar on “Peace and Progress: Role of Religions”

A two-day international seminar on “Peace and Progress: Role of Religions” held on 11-12 February, 2012 at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) started with recitation from the holy Quran by Qari Hamid Mian. The seminar was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies in collaboration with Faculty of Theology, AMU.

In his welcome address Prof. Ali Mohammad Naqvi, Dean Faculty of Theology, described IOS as a think tank and lauded its Chairman Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam’s tireless efforts in the field of study and research.

The theme of the seminar, he said, was “fundamental, thought-provoking and contested.” Western discourse understood progress primarily in a material, unidimensional and technical sense. “Might comes from science, but right comes only from religion,” he remarked.

Religion, however, had not always been a force for the good. Pre-Renaissance Europe, as also other regions and societies, saw oppression in the name of religion, which had often been used as a foil to power, Prof. Naqvi remarked.

In his introductory remarks former head of Deptt. of Philosophy, AMU, Prof. Mohammad Muqim introduced the IOS Aligarh Chapter, which he heads. He also made some comments on “peace” and “progress,” trying to put them in a proper logical and philosophical perspective.

The Chairman of IOS, Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam, in his

address introduced the year-long IOS Silver Jubilee celebrations under which 14 seminars were to be held at different locations in India under the broad theme of “Knowledge, Peace and Development.” Twelve of them (including this seminar) had already been organised on sub-themes emanating from the above.

Regarding “Peace and Progress: Role of Religions” he raised four issues and asked the audience and participants to mull over them. The following were the points raised:

1. All religions should strive for moral leadership of the world, offer an alternative model of life to the

(especially Muslims) either living in the West, or educated from the West, are no longer marginal outcasts or outside spectators in the central debates of the times, i.e.,

- a) Religious issues and wider human concerns
- b) Equality and untouchability
- c) Poverty and unlimited affluence
- d) Understanding religious history and current political problems
- e) Creation of wealth and income and equitable distribution of it
- f) Shackle of slavery and exploitation and emancipation from it.

In his inaugural address Sheikh Gamaluddin Mohammad Kotb, head of the Fatwa Committee of al-Azhar, Egypt and a member of IIIT Washington, said that in Islam “one of the names of God is al-Salam (Peace). It is not without reason that Islam derives from the same word that means peace, and the name of the final abode in heaven is Darus-Salam (home of peace).

He congratulated IOS for its efforts to bring peace between religions and thanked

Dr Alam for his taking the trouble to organise the seminar in collaboration with Faculty of Theology, AMU. He quoted a Hadith that says, “One who does not thank humans does not thank God.”

In his address Dr Mustafa Hussein Sairfi from Doha, Qatar, said that no progress was possible without peace and no peace was possible in a stagnant society. Peace is the key idea in Islam. Quoting scripture he said peace lay in the remembrance of God. He referred to the Islamic precept that the “entire creation is God’s family.” Peace must prevail in the family.



L-R: Prof M. Saud Alam Qasmi, Prof. Syed Ali Mohammad Naqvi, Dr. M.D. Thomas, Swami Sarwanand Saraswati, Dr. Mustafa Sairfi, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Mr. K. Rahman Khan, Prof. Sibghatullah Farooqui, Shaikh Gamaluddin Kotb, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, Swami Dharmananda, Mr. Geshe Dorji Damdul,

- rampant consumerism and pursuit of power which characterises the Western-dominated modernity.
2. The gap among religions keeps growing, a systemic bias and prejudice has been increasing, mistrust among different religions has been accelerated.
3. The endemic problem is the tendency to “play to the gallery”, so to speak, among leaders of religions being engaged more in posturing rather than real conversation or dialogue.
4. Another fundamental problem is intellectuals from different religions

Justice, economic and social, and freedom of thought and action, speech and expression, were vital for peace, he asserted.

Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani said “peace and progress are central to Islam”. Ideas of racial supremacy, inequality and injustice, he said, undermined peace.

Church leader Dr M D Thomas said peace was known by many names: Salam, Shalom, Shanti, Aman, etc. “People have different ideas of peace: it is absence of war, inner (personal) tranquility, tolerance and, even inaction. Some take it as a personal state of mind, others relate it to God. Yet others see it in the way human affairs are transacted. Peace, in fact, is life,” he remarked.

He said peace had to be a holistic, a forward movement on all sides—material progress, spiritual enlightenment, personal tranquility and social peace, peace within nations and between nations. Religion, he said, helped it, and quoted Pope John Paul XXIII, “We have to look for things that unite people, not things that divide them.”

Jain guru Swami Dharmanand a congratulated the IOS for holding such a meaningful seminar with the collaboration of Faculty of Theology, AMU. He said the 20th century had witnessed a great deal of material progress, to the effect that today millions of people lived the life of kings of earlier ages. Yet, the 20th century had also witnessed two World Wars that killed millions of people.

“Wars are born in the minds of men, and it is the mind that must be at peace with itself to prevent wars”, he asserted. Among the enemies of peace were “growing consumerism and loss of control over ourselves, as well as inequity.”

Discipline, the Swamiji said, would lead to internal peace and wide access to education, jobs and health services would provide external peace.

Buddhist intellectual and director of Tibet House in Delhi, Genshe Dorji Damdul, said that there was no mind-body dichotomy about peace or progress. “The mind experiences peace and progress through the body. Mind and matter together constitute material and spiritual progress.”

Lack of harmony between the two led to conflict and suffering and in harmony dissolved all pain. He said it was a dynamic process that had to be happily accepted.

“The world is like a single living body today, each part dependent on the other. Such interdependence leads us to care for each other. In this scenario divisions and differences are bound to

teaches violence. It is lack of dialogue that promotes animosity.”

He pleaded for greater equality and justice as these were the foundations on which peace stood.

## Day II Business Session I

In the first business session Jain intellectual Dr Reeta Bagchi spoke on “The Role of Jainism in Shaping Global Ethics for Peace and Progress.” She emphasised the role of non-violence and non-possession in establishing a climate conducive for peace and progress.

The presidium consisted of Prof. Sudip K. Jain and Swami Omkar Chaitanya. The session was anchored by Dr Touqueer Alam Falahi.

Prof. M M Verma, speaking on “Islam and Other Religions: Inter-relatedness for Peace and Progress” said,

from his study of Islamic scriptures he had come to the conclusion that it accepted religious diversity. “Islam accepts that God sent 124,000 prophets to the different areas of the earth at different times. That showed Islam recognised and celebrated diversity, he asserted.

Dr Raziul Islam Nadvi said that among Muslim ulema there were two opposite opinions currently on

attacking non-combatants and acquiring nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. To one group “the two are absolutely *haram* (prohibited), while to the other they are permissible in rare circumstances.”

Former Dean Faculty of Theology, AMU, Prof. Farman Hussain was of the opinion that religion had often been the cause of conflict. Diversity of sects and interpretations within Islam had led to great strife.

“Religion has not always been a source of peace,” he asserted. “Israeli



A view of the audience

occur. The role of religion is to make us appreciate and celebrate that diversity,” he philosophised.

In his address Swami Sarwananda Sarswati congratulated the IOS for presenting “such a beautiful bouquet of flowers of all religions” at the seminar. He said there was a simple *mantra* for peace: “Remove hatred from amongst us and peace will follow.”

The chief Guest K Rahman Khan, Deputy Speaker of Rajya Sabha, said lack of interaction among faiths bred suspicion and conflict. “No religion



aggression against Palestinians and America's war against Muslim countries are driven by religious differences," he opined. Prof. Hussain pleaded for a better understanding of religion.

Associate Professor of Sociology at Agra University, Dr Mohammad Arshad, presented a sociological understanding of religion in the framework of Durkheim's, Marx's and Weber's theories of religion.

A Turkish scholar from Banaras Hindu University, Cemil (Jamil) Kutluturk, presented a paper on "Peace and Non-Violence: Islamic and Gandhian Perspective."

In his presidential remarks Swami Omkar Chaitanya said that religion had become a source of confusion instead of enlightenment "because we have not understood it."

### Business Session II

Dr Ambreen Jamali said "peace is the central theme of Islam: as the word draws from *salam* (peace)."

Dr Latif Hussain Kazmi spoke on "Islam on Peace, Human Equality and Racial Harmony" and emphasised justice and equality, tolerance and goodwill.

Prof. Sudeep Jain said mere material progress was not enough and it had to be augmented with spiritual growth as well. Acceptance of, and agreement to do, one's duty towards others was essential for peace, he opined.

Prof. Tejinder Singh Lamba, a member of the session's presidium, chose to spoke, not on war or peace, but on "just war", which often preceded peace.

A war against aggression, "as waged by Guru Tegh Bahadur, is a just war." Martyrdom was part of a just war, which was fought not merely to end suffering

but to advance the cause of justice, he asserted.

This session was anchored by Dr Muhibbul Haque of Deptt. of Political Science, AMU.

### Business Session III

In his paper on "*Islam ka Nazariya-e-Amn w Traqqi*" (Islam's concept of peace and progress) Dr Ehsanullah Fahd examined the issues in the light of writings of Shah Waliullah Dehlavi and Syed Qutb.

Dr Shaista Parveen in her paper on "*Hindu Mazhab mein Amn ka Tasawwur*" (The concept of peace in Hindu religion) extensively quoted Hindu scriptures to indicate that "*shanti* (peace) is a core value in Hinduism."

Dr Muhibbul Haque's paper was on the "Deconstruction of the Contemporary Discourse on Terrorism: A Pre-requisite for Peace and

regarded as terror while the acts of state terror were ignored.

He referred to Samuel P. Huntington's remark, "You cannot have true friends without having true enemies", and made the point that the current Western discourse on terrorism branded the violent acts of enemies as terrorism while the violent acts of friends were seen differently.

This discourse on terrorism, Dr Haque said, was caught in a "definitional dilemma." Facile descriptions like "Catholic feudalism" and "Protestant capitalism" had their equivalents in the Western discourse on terror as well: "Islamic terror" and "Islamofascism", for instance.

The penchant for labelling ended up maligning a particular religious group trying to resist occupation and misappropriation of its natural resources, Dr Haque asserted, and asked for

correction of the discourse wedded to Western hegemonic agenda.

Prof. Salahuddin Qureishi talked on "Socio-economic and Environmental Aspects of Religion vis-a-vis Civilisation." He said, "Civilisation is the product of religion through the establishment of norms like morality, social organisation, perseverance..." He lamented the decline of moral values as

indicated by the falling sex ratio in India.

Church leader Dr Dominic Emanuel said, "Peace in Christianity hinges on justice", as God is just. Thus, justice should not only be done, but seen to be done. Like justice and peace, progress too is part of the Christian vision as "Christianity has allowed the use of free thinking", a basic pre-requisite for progress.

Dr Emanuel said the right to have a dissenting opinion, recognised in



Speaker: Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS

Prosperity."

Condensing the paper (for shortage of time) into some major points, he said that the Western powers did not want a clear-cut definition of terrorism. That is why all efforts at a consensus on the definition of "terrorism" going on in the UN since 1970s had failed to produce any result.

The present Western discourse on terrorism, he said, was "actor-centric." In this scheme of things the acts of terror of individuals and private groups only were

Christianity, led to independent thinking, which helped Christian nations progress. The habit of organising and investing intellectual, material and spiritual resources led to progress. Those who were not capable of it did not progress, he concluded.

Dr Obaidullah Fahd's paper was on "Sectarianism and Peace-building Process: A Case History of Syed M. Ashraf Kachochavi." He said growing sectarianism among Muslims (in this case, Sunni Muslims) was not a good omen for peace among them.

Prof. Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui said progress was possible only in a situation of peace. Humans, he elaborated, possessed both animal and angelic traits. Islam sought to suppress the animal side and sharpen the angelic aspects, which among other things, helped peace.

Islam did not want peace for Muslims alone, but for everyone, he said. After the conquest of Makkah no one was coerced to accept Islam and social justice was ensured, which led to growth of art and culture, he explained.

Dr Sameena Khan, associate professor of English, AMU, talked about the affinity between religion and literature.

"Like religion, literature sensitises us to the suffering of others." Putting things into a feminist perspective, she said that a re-reading of texts from the side of women was required to correct our understanding of women's creativity and their role in keeping the world peaceful and happy.

For instance, by asking Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, Eve was not initiating sex but starting creativity. Women with their writing and film-making (besides other forms of creativity) had established a higher standard of morality and quality of life.

She mentioned Meera Bai, Qurratulain Hyder, Arundhati Roy, Teesta Setalvad and several others – women from different times and climes, writing in different genres and languages – who had created so much value.

She mentioned Nargis in the film *Mother India*, a young widow representing the highest values of the motherland. Her character represented great fortitude, integrity, sacrifice and



Speaker: Dr. Mustafa Sairfi, Visiting Professor, Doha, Qatar

forgiveness. Of her two sons one becomes an engineer who heralds progress, the other she kills for trying to rape the daughter of the man who had tried to molest her.

Women's writing, she said, had the power to move and change societies. For instance, she quoted Pakistani author Qaisra Shahrnaz's novel *The Holy Woman*. It is on the theme of "Shahzadi Ibadat," young women "married to the Quran" in Pakistan's tribal areas. This custom had been used as a cunning device by landlords to prevent the marriage of their daughters and forestall the division of their lands. After the publication of this novel Pakistan government moved to curb the practice.

She recited the poem of an Israeli poet, Ida Ahroni, a woman. The poem says, "Peace is a woman and a mother / How do you say peace is a woman? / I met her..." The woman, Peace, happens to be a mother mourning her children

slain in Hiroshima, Bosnia, Israel Palestine...

## Business Session IV-V

In this combined session Syed Atiqur Rahim talked on Islam's way of establishing peace while Komal J B Singh presented the salient features of Sikhism.

Ms Singh said *simran* (self-realisation) and *seva* (selfless service) were crucial to the faith. Sikhism envisages a casteless society, religious tolerance, living truthfully "rather than just believing in truth", charity, providing food and shelter to the needy. The four doors of Harmandir Sahab, she said, represented four great religions. The institution of offering food and shelter to everyone had some interesting aspects to it. When Emperor Akbar visited Golden Temple he too was offered food from the *langar*.

Faizan Kabir Qasmi spoke on the role of religion in promoting harmony, which led to peace.

In his presidential address Prof. Masood Ahmad, Dean Faculty of Science, AMU, said Islam looked at humans as vice-regents of God on earth. This high position made it incumbent on humans to run the affairs of the world with a great sense of responsibility. Religion, he said, gives "a moral order which integrates society for harmony, peace and progress."

## Valedictory Session

This session was chaired by Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam and the introductory remarks were made by Prof. Saud Alam Qasmi.

Special guest Prof. Abdul Haq Ansari, former Ameer Jamaat Islami Hind, observed that humans were made *khalifah* (vice-regent) of God, a position of great honour and greater

responsibility. That, he said, demanded holistic progress.

In his valedictory address Dr Mustafa Hussein Saifi congratulated IOS on the completion of 25 years in promotion of knowledge and peace. "The people here should convey this message of peace to others who are not here," he said.

He said that Islam did not spread through violence as alleged by some people. "The Quran says all humans are from Adam and Eve." Being the children of a single pair of parents people must learn to accommodate each other and live in peace, he concluded.

Prof. Naqvi said that the seminar had left an enduring impact. He pleaded for the establishment of "an Interfaith and Intrafaith Dialogue Centre" at Aligarh by the IOS.

In his presidential address Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam said that the two-day seminar had provided him with a great learning experience. He said he would think of establishing an IOS Centre for Interfaith Dialogue at Aligarh if he got enough local support.

He said, "The IOS does not belong to Dr Manzoor Alam. It belongs to all of you, the entire nation, especially the youth."

In that vein he asked the young people to work for change, change for a better, more equitable and prosperous order.

Prof. Saud Alam Qasmi proposed a vote of thanks.

The following were honoured during the two-day proceedings:

1. Dr. M.D. Thomas, National Director, Commission for Religious Harmony, New Delhi
2. Rev Dr. Dominic Emanuel SVD, Spokesperson & Director, Delhi Catholic Archdiocese, New Delhi
3. Swami Dharmananda, Director, Adhyatma Sadhana Kendra, New Delhi
4. Prof B S Sindhu, Former Professor Department of Religious studies Punjab University Chandigarh
5. Mr. Geshe Dorji Damdul, Director, Tibet House (Culture Centre for HH Dalai Lama), New Delhi

6. H.H. Swami Sarvanand Saraswati, Maha Shakti Peeth, New Delhi
7. Dr. M.M. Verma, President, Interfaith Foundation for India, New Delhi
8. Dr. M. Abdul Haq Ansari, Former, Ameer, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, New Delhi
9. Dr. Amanullah Khan, Renowned Surgeon, Aligarh
10. Prof. I.H. Siddiqui, Former Chariman, Department of History, AMU, Aligarh
11. Mr. Mohammed Muquim, Chairman, Deptt. of Philosophy, AMU, Aligarh and Coordinator, IOS Aligarh Chapter
12. Prof. Syed Ali Mohammad Naqvi, Department to Shia Theology, AMU, Aligarh
13. Prof. M. Saud Alam Qasmi, Department of Sunni Theology, AMU, Aligarh

## Resolutions:

1. Religions have their important role in establishing peace at the country level as well as at the international level. All religions of the world teach us love of the Creator and love of humanity, to shun hatred and violence, and to have good moral conduct in dealing with each other. Therefore, it is the responsibility of religious leaders to propagate universal values fully well.
2. All religions have taught mankind to base their dealings with each other on principles of justice and equality. Further, man is taught to be compassionate in dealing with women, children, the aged and the minorities, enjoining justice, peace and tranquility. These can't be established unless human dealings are unbiased. This Seminar, therefore, urges the governments to ensure justice sans any discrimination whatsoever. Further, they should also ensure freedom of expression, productive economic activity for betterment and to ensure citizens' rights to everyone without any discrimination.
3. It is wrong to say that religion is a hurdle to progress. The fact is that religion encourages and supports all

those activities which are in harmony with humanity and morality with benefits to man. Every religion appreciates all those activities which are beneficial to human development, and goes to encourage spirituality in man.

4. For human welfare and maintenance of peace not only the material development, but moral development, and revival of humane values are also essential. Therefore, this Seminar urges upon the governments not to merely reckon scientific technological and economic development only as standard of development, but also to give importance to improvement and enrichment of educational system and developments of social and economic enactments, so that all individuals and groups of the people attain high moral standards in all our spheres of their activities giving due importance to humane and moral values. Without these, our development shall remain scanty.
5. Lastly, the IOS is requested to establish such an organization, which shall work for understanding between people of different faiths and religions, giving consideration to each other's views and to jointly work for establishing brotherhood among the people. It is envisaged that this organization shall hold regular InterFaith Discussions; shall publish literature concerning these, and shall hold meetings on common human and social problems to remove misunderstandings from our midst, so that establishment of a social order be made possible, based on brotherhood, mutual understanding, non-violence and on principles of peace and tranquility.

## International Seminar at MANUU on "Islamic Culture and Art"

A three-day international seminar on "Islamic Culture and Art" held on 30-31 December 2011 and January 1, 2012 at the Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) started with



recitation from the holy Quran. Prof. Wahab Qaisar formally welcomed the delegates and participants. The seminar was jointly organised by the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), MESCO and MANUU.

In his address the IOS Chairman Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam explained the main theme of year-long IOS Silver Jubilee Celebrations, "Knowledge, Development and Peace", from which sub-themes emanated for 14 seminars and conferences that were, and would be, held at different locations in India. The Hyderabad seminar was the ninth in the series.

Dr Alam announced the establishment of an IOS Centre for Islamic Culture and Arts at Hyderabad in days ahead. He said the foundation stone of the proposed Objective University being planned by the IOS would be laid in 2012 at Palwal in Haryana just outside Delhi.

The Governor of Andhra Pradesh, ESL Narasimhan, mentioned the extraordinary contribution of Islam to arts, mathematics and medicine, among other areas of life. "Islamic art draws from nature", he said.

He referred to the composite culture of India, built over centuries by Hindus, Muslims and other Indians. The great Mughals were instrumental in the development of composite culture in which different elements coalesced and blended to give birth to the magnificent

phenomenon called the Indian culture. Such a fine harmony was symbolised by the Taj Mahal in which marble was inlaid with precious stones, which showed India's rich cultural heritage.

He said, culture, a celebration of the senses, did not stand in isolation, but was composed of different elements and those elements could not be separated from one another.

In his keynote address Prof. A.R. Momin, former head of Sociology,

This led to creation of "layers upon layers of culture," he said, referring to Dr Tarachand's observations regarding multiplicity of sources of Indian culture.

Dr Ansari cited anthropologist Edward Teller's views on culture as "a complex fold of belief, knowledge and practices and as a dialogue between religious experience and the realm of reality."

He said literature, architecture, philosophy and painting reflected culture. Under Muslim rule, most of the time the state was not theocratic and state organisations made laws, not Islam. All this happened in a milieu which, as al-Beiruni saw it, preferred to "relate, not criticise."

Towards the 12th century AD a new architecture developed, the landscape architecture of Ahmedabad, Mandu, Hyderabad

and other places.

Persian and Hindu artists came together to create records of India's flora and fauna through painting during the reign of Jehangir, who was a connoisseur of arts. It was then that "aesthetic became a marker of sovereignty."

He referred to Baburnama, Tuzk-e-Jahangiri and Humayunama to make the point. In the construction of the edifice of India's Ganga-Jamuni culture, sufis, "who sought commonality," played a significant role. Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb's brother, who mingled with sufis and bhaktas, wrote Majmu-e-Bahrain (Confluence of Rivers)



L-R: Prof. A.R. Momin, Prof. Mohammed Jamil bin Ali Al-Khayat, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Shri D. Saridhar Babu, Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Shri E.S.L. Narasimhan, Prof. Mohammad Miyan; Dr. Fakhruddin Mohammed, Prof. H. Khatija Begum

University of Bombay, said centuries of Muslim rule in Hyderabad had introduced Islam not just as a faith and a set of rituals but as a repository of cultural values, a fine moral code and social institutions as well. It was part of a cultural landscape spreading from Atlantic to South Asia, Africa to China.

Delivering the keynote address Dr Hamid Ansari, Vice-President of India, referred to the nebulous past of India, where over millennia different races, with their own belief systems and ways of life, came down to settle.

emphasising the syncretic nature of Indian culture. Dr Ansari also referred to Dr Tarachand's Impact of Islam on India in support of his views.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Fakhruddin Mohammad, a physician and educationist from Hyderabad.

#### Day-2

The first session, chaired by Prof. Vinod Jairath, had "Islam and Pluralistic Society" as its theme. Dr Shafique Ahmad Shaikh, assistant registrar, MANUU, asserted that right from the beginning the Islamic state had tried to create and promote a pluralistic society. This trend was visible in the treaty Muslims concluded with the Jews and Christians of Medina on the establishment of the first Muslim state. The same trend was visible from Arab Spain (Andalusia) to Mughal India.

In his paper on "Influence of Muslims on Indian Society," Syed Islamuddin Mujahid (reader, Urdu Deptt., Arts [Evening] College, Hyderabad) quoted from Dr Tarachand to point out that every aspect of Indian life was touched and influenced by Muslims. Historian Jadunath Sarkar wrote that the fair and just order created by Muslims would not be ignored by any historian. "Sher Shah strictly enforced the equality of all religions," he said, and quoted Punjab Kesari Lala Lajpat Rai's remark that Muslims had been fair to Hindus.

Dr Mujahid quoted from the Discovery of India by Pandit Jawaharlal

Nehru to assert that Muslim rulers integrated India as they considered themselves to be Indian. They regarded India as a free country and every Indian as free. They tried to protect every Indian life. That was why Shahjehan's rule witnessed very few cases of sati. To make the burning of women on the pyres of dead husbands difficult permission of the governor had to be obtained. The governor discouraged the practice and ensured state's help to the widow and her children.



Speaker: Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari. H.E. Vice President of India

Dr Syed Fazlullah Mukarram (associate professor, Oriental Urdu PG college, Himayat Nagar, Hyderabad) made an elaborate presentation on the contribution of the Qutubshahi rulers to the development of Telugu language and literature.

The second session, jointly chaired by Prof. Afzal Wani and Dr Mazhar Hussain, was devoted to the same theme as the one preceeding it.

Dr GN Khaki (associate professor, Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir) talked on "Cultural Interaction Between Central Asia and India: Studying the Role of Islam." His central point was that trade, the pursuit of scholarship,

migration and Muslim diaspora led to the spread of Islam across the known world.

Dr Nikhat Jahan (associate professor, Distance Education, MANUU) presented a paper on composite culture as represented in Urdu *marsiya* (elegy).

Sufis, *bhaktas* and their *khanqahs* and dargahs created an eclectic ambience conducive to cross-fertilisation of religious ideas. Muslims wrote songs on Indian spring and other themes and Hindu poets eulogised Muslim religious figures. "In Andhra Pradesh, farmers tilling the land and weavers working at their looms sing these *marsiyas*," she said, emphasising the popularity and endurance of that genre of poetry.

Composite culture was a long time in the making. Assamese Muslims fought Afghans and Persians on the side of the Hindu Ahom rulers

near Gauhati in 1498, Sazzad Hussain from Lakhimpur college in Assam said in his "Muslims in Assam: The Way Forward". A Muslim warrior, Bagh Hazarika, fought Mughals in 1671.

Shah Meeran-Azam Peer's *ziker* was based on the hymns of Sankardev's (17th century) tradition. The mutual enrichment picked up pace after the influx of Bengalis from Mymensingh (now in Bangladesh) to Assam in the 19th century. Better-trained and organised farmers as they were, they were brought in by the British to cultivate the vast tracts of fallow lands in Assam and thus contribute to increase in government revenue.



Mr Hussain also referred to the “anti-foreigners movement” of the 1970s and the horrible massacre of Muslims at Nellie, which he described as “the only known massacre of Muslims in Assam.” One-third of Assam being Muslim, Islam, naturally, has a highly visible presence there.

Jafar Sadiq of English department (Centre for English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad) in his paper on “Muslim Art and Cultural Forms in Kerala” said that Muslim contribution had been of an “integrative, yet sharply distinct”, nature.

In the next session Nanak Singh Nishtar (director, International Sikh Centre for Interfaith Relations, Hyderabad) talked about “Similarities Between Sikhs, and Muslims” and the shared common ground between different religions.

In the Guru Granth Sahab, the works of seven Muslims and two untouchables figure. This holy text strongly supports namaz (*salat*), he said.

He said several Hindu kings resisted Guru Gobind Singh, who was firmly supported by a Muslim *peer* at a great personal cost. As a gesture of reconciliation, Sikhs handed over a gurudwara to Muslims in 2003 to be converted into a mosque.

Mr. Shabeer Ahmad Taing, a research scholar in the department of English, MANUU, talked about composite culture and Indian society with reference to Muslim contribution. He cited the specific rishi-sufi tradition of Kashmir that created a milieu for

Hindus and Muslims to blend “like milk and sugar.”

The next session, jointly presided by Dr Syed Taqi Abedi and Prof. Mohsin Usmani, had “Islam and Sufism” as its theme. Shah Mohammad Shahid Ahmed Siddiqui, *mutwalli* Aastanay-e-Ghausiya, Warrangal, talked about sufi movement in India from his own experience as the



Speaker: Shri E.S.L. Narasimhan, H.E. Governor of Andhra Pradesh

head of a sufi dargah. He emphasised the pro-people stance of sufis. “Islam and peace are synonymous”, he declared. He traced the origin and growth of Sufism through India, the Subcontinent and Asia as a whole.

Dr Scott Kugle of Emory University, Deptt. of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, made a presentation on “Siraj Aurangabadi: Sufi Master, Qawwali Patron and Urdu Poet.” Aurangabadi fell madly in love with a woman and “mixed the romantic with the mystic.” Almost a contemporary of Wali Dakkani, who went to Delhi, Siraj Aurangabadi never left Deccan. He was pioneer of Urdu ghazal as Amir Khusro was of Hindi ghazal. Dr Kugle sang one of Aurangabadi’s ghazals to great acclaim.

Dr Syed Alim Ashraf Jaisi, assistant professor, department of Arabic, MANUU, presented a paper on the sufi movement against colonialism in the context of North Africa.

Sufis, Dr Jaisi said, were often war heroes. Chazzali, Abdul Qadir Jilani and Salahuddin Ayyubi were both sufis and warriors, he asserted, quoting historian

Khaliq Ahmad Nizami.

Ibne-e-Khaldun too had similar views. He mentioned the two-and-a-half century old Central Asian and Caucasian Muslims’ struggle against Russian colonialism. From Egypt to Somalia, sufism is synonymous with Islam and it has worked as vanguard in

the struggle for independence from colonial rule. Imam Shafei used to volunteer as a guard from morning to night. Sanussi sufis led the north African people in their struggle for independence from Western colonial rule, Dr Jaisi said.

In his paper on Sufism and Mathnavi Maulana Rum Dr Mohammad Abdul Hameed Akbar said that sufism drew from the Quran and Hadith and thus was not antithetical to doctorial Islam as commonly believed.

In his presidential address Dr Syed Taqi Abidi said that Islam had come to unite, not divide. He recited the Persian couplet: *Tu barai wasl kardan amadi / na ke barai fasl kardan amadi* (You, Muslims, have come to unite, not to divide).

**Day-3**

The first session of the last day, devoted to “Islamic Art and Calligraphy”, was chaired by Dr Mohammad Ziauddin Shakeb.

Dr Mohammad Shujath Ali, deputy director, CPDUM, MANUU, Hyderabad, spoke on the “Multiple Forms of Indian Art: The Art of Music,” while Dr Habib Nisar, Department of Urdu, HCU, Hyderabad, chose to speak on the “Role of Amir Khusro in the Development of Indian Music.” Mohammad Muneer, MA Women’s Studies, MANUU, Hyderabad’s paper was on “Calligraphy as an Islamic Art.”

Dr Salma Ahmad Farooqui, associate professor DDE, MANUU, Hyderabad, presented a paper on “The Making of Mughal Art—From Islamic to Un-Islamic: An Analysis of Paintings.”

She said Mughals brought numerous art forms to India, mainly of Persian origin. Emperor Akbar, who wanted to rule over the whole of India, made a departure from the Shariah to suit his goals.

He built up the power of the state with an elaborate apparatus, created a suitable political culture in which different religious sections and ethnic groups found a place. A wide array of nobles and religious figures, including Ulema, were accommodated. A sizeable number of non-Muslims were given important positions in the administration. With Sulah-e-Kul and Deen-e-Ilahi he secularised the polity.

Muslim painters showed ancient Indian motifs. These were distinctly

Indian. There was no codification of laws. Muslims generally avoided painting as it was seen to be imitating God’s creativity. During Babur’s rule Chinese influence came via Persia as is evident from the features of the figures painted during that era. “The Mughal version of art was essentially Indian”, she asserted.

Under Akbar important texts were illustrated. Shahnama, Tutinama and Baburnama were among the major texts thus illustrated. Abdus Samad trained many Hindu painters. Under Jehangir painters like Abul Hasan and Ustad Mansur flourished.

“Sensuality has been celebrated in

“Through the finite a geographical pattern suggests the infinite”, he pointed out. Ishraqi held that realistic representation led to the imagining of what is beyond the known and familiar.

Dr. Fatahi al-Maakawi elaborated upon the “Manifestation of Tawhid in Islamic Art: Theory of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi”.

### Valedictory Session

Syed Zakir Hussain, Member Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, welcomed the guests effusively.

A rapporteur’s version of the highlights of the seminar was presented by Dr Prof. Khalid Saeed, director-in-charge, CULLIC, and organising secretary of the seminar.

Prof. Afzal Wani, professor of law, IP University, Delhi, and member governing council, IOS, presented a draft resolution of the seminar.

The guest of honour, Dr Tajuddin Ahmad, in his address pointed out that Islamic art and culture was not confined to India or the

Sub-continent alone, but was visible worldwide, across continents.

The chief guest, Jannat Husain, IAS, Chief Information Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh, endorsed the views presented at the seminar over the last three days.

In his valedictory address, MANUU vice-chancellor Prof. Mohammad Miyan, lauded the accomplishments of IOS, its staff and chairman, Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam. Prof.



A view of the audience

India”. This trend came into Mughal painting during Shahjehan’s time. Under Aurangzeb’s rule it was not encouraged, but continued nonetheless in his youth, middle age and old age.

Ali Asghar Mullazehi talked on “Art and the Spiritual in Islamic Aesthetics”. He said great Persian poets like Hafiz, Saadi and Rumi recognised the legitimacy of image-making. Geometrical patterns could have unlimited variants, suggesting infinity.

Miyan, Dr Alam and Mr Jannat Hussein being the alumni of Aligarh Muslim University, he referred to the love for the alma-mater that had given them a sense of kinship and common perspective on life.

Institutions survived the individuals who built and supported them. Thus, he said, institutions mattered more. Coming back to the IOS, he said that it had worked tirelessly over the last quarter century for the cultural integration of India. It had been working for its goals through interaction with government and society.

He stressed the need for large-heartedness and concern for people from all sections of society. "This is how sufis helped the cultural integration of India". That, he concluded, was the way to go.

In his presidential address Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam highlighted the nationwide programmes held in the IOS Silver Jubilee Year. "It was the ninth such programme", Dr Alam said regarding the Hyderabad conference.

Dr Alam informed the large audience that the concluding programme to be held in April 2012 in New Delhi would be on minorities and one of the issues to be deliberated would be the backwardness of Indian Muslims in higher education.

Finally, he invited the audience, and through them the people of India, to "come together, sit together, think together, work together".

Prof. Khalid Sayeed proposed a vote of thanks.

The following were awarded at the seminar over three days:

1. Dr Rahimuddin Kemal (for his Contributions to Learning – Writings: Philosophy, Law, Culture)

2. Prof Sadiq Naqvi (for his contribution to Learning- History)
3. Mr M A Qaiyum (for his contributions to Archaeology- Conservation of Monuments & Writings)
4. Ms Lakshmi Devi Raj (for her contributions to Culture- Museology / Revival of Art forms: textiles)
5. Pandit Vithal Rao (for his contributions to Art – Performing Arts: Music/ Ghazal singer)
6. Ms P. Anuradha Reddy (for her contributions to Culture- Heritage conservation Activist, Writer: History, Photographer: Cultural Assets)
7. Sahibzada Mir Azmat Ali Khan (for his contributions to Islamic Art- Sketches and drawings of monuments)
8. Mr K O Qarni (for his contribution to Art: Paintings and Sketches of monuments, restoration of paintings)
9. Prof. Mohsin Usmani Nadvi Dean, Arab Studies, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad
10. Prof. Khalid Saeed Director Incharge, CULLC, MANUU, Hyderabad
11. Mr Sajjad Shahid Member, General Assembly, Institute of Objective Studies
12. Dr Salman Abid MESCO CADRE, Hyderabad
13. Mr A Nagendra Reddy Director Salar Jung Museum Hyderabad

The following book was released on the occasion:

- The Role of Muslims in the Indian Freedom Struggle 1857-1947 by Dr Shawkatullah Khan

The following resolution was passed at the end of the seminar:

Maintaining the spirit of preservation and protection of human heritage in general and 'culture and art' in particular, in all its dispositions, as encouraged by national and international laws and policies, an International Seminar on "Islamic Culture and Art" has been organised jointly by the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi (celebrating its Silver Jubilee), Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad and Muslim Educational Social and Cultural Organisation (MESCO), Hyderabad from 30th December 2011 to 1st January 2012.

The Conference appreciated the commendable action of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, with a great visionary Prof. Mohammad Miyan as its Vice-Chancellor, in announcing the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Deccan Studies at its Campus in Gachibowli, Hyderabad.

The Conference also appreciated the establishment of an Islamic Art Gallery at Salar Jung Museum of Hyderabad which has been announced by its management.

1. The study of art and culture should not be confined to merely a recollection of past glory and achievements, it should rather be aimed at an impartial probing of all the anthropological realities, which were instrumental in shaping history.
2. The Institute of Objective Studies should be instrumental in promoting research and publication in the field



of Islamic Culture and Art with main focus on: (a) production of literature and organising training programmes for creating necessary skills for the persons in the field leading to a consistent development of Islamic art world over; (b) development of critical approach in the study of culture and art; (c) perceptive appreciation of worth claiming higher achievements and excellence and fair acknowledgement of the failures as the case may be; and (d) giving of impartial treatment to issues with logically sound description of facts and findings to add rich academic value to the output of scholars in this field.

3. A trust should be established to protect, preserve, conserve and safeguard cultural assets.
4. Because of a threat of extinction faced by them, an extensive documentation of the cultural assets should be immediately undertaken, especially in the fields of textiles, metal works, etc. One of the ways to achieve this is to establish an Islamic Arts Council to promote artisans and craftsmen by providing value addition in terms of support in innovative designs, attractive packaging and effective marketing.
5. Faculties of Arts/Islamic Studies in various universities and institutions may be contacted and requested to introduce courses on Islamic art and culture as per the requirements of its preservation and promotion using modern methods for appraisal and understanding.
6. Courses must be introduced in disaster management with programmes to train the staff of disaster management agencies in

protecting cultural assets in time of crisis.

7. Art and objects of art should be made a common attraction for tourists from within and outside the country. Specific exhibitions and presentations on each aspect of the multifaceted culture and heritage should be highlighted.
8. Relevant ministries/departments at the Central and State levels may be persuaded to create Islamic and comparative art galleries in all major towns in the country for a broader understanding of cultures by the people.
9. Institute of Objective Studies may coordinate with similar organisations in India and other countries to work together and promote studies on culture and art globally.
10. Muslims should be especially made to understand the interdependent relationship between their faith and their art and be sensitised to pay due attention to the increasing significance of art as an instrument of economic advancement.

***Contd. from page-1***

On the other hand, there are also increasingly numerous reports about imams who do inspire the younger generation, whose knowledge in matters of religious is taken seriously, and who have been able to make young men change their behavior. These are not necessarily the imams whose sermons are more 'relevant' to Western society. An interesting example is described extensively by Martijin de Koning in his dissertation on young Moroccans in a mosque in the city of Gouda. Here it was a young imam, fresh from Morocco, who taught very strict rules about right and wrong Muslim behavior and made no

effort to adapt his teaching to the context, who succeeded in drawing youth into the mosque and changing their public behavior. The imam was less popular with the mosque committee, and after a conflict he had to leave-showing once again where power in the mosque resides.

**From *Producing Islamic Knowledge*, edited by Martin & Allievi, pp. 5-6**

***Contd. from page-12***

It was more or less what we call free trade or market economy without the unfair practices that we observe today.

It is clear that Islam stands for globalization. Be it globalization of knowledge, trade or technology, Islam wants it on the basis of principles of equity, justice and fairness by creating an atmosphere in which exploitation, discrimination and all other unjust practices will be forbidden. Unfortunately the current globalization has been unleashed by Anglo-Saxon intellectuals and politicians. Although they speak in favour of globalization benefitting one and all, the fact is that they have sought to exploit the poor nations. Globalization has today no doubt increased wealth as never before. But it has sadly been pocketed by the rich and the powerful. As a result the poor has become poorer and life is indeed becoming a kind of punishment for him.

The Muslims should take globalization as a challenge. Every challenge has an element of opportunity in it. Or perhaps every challenge can be converted into an opportunity. Converting globalization into an opportunity would not be easy as today's Muslim world suffers from Knowledge deficit and lacks economic resources. But despite these and other shortcomings, the Muslims have no option except trying to convert challenges into opportunities.

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## **Islam and Globalization**

**by Ishtiyaque Danish**

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

Both the Islamic faith and civilization are inclusive as well as universalist.

Philosophically speaking, everything inclusive is bound to be universalist. Inclusive here means to accept or receive from the other. In the process of receiving, inclusiveness may give to the other whatever it has. Universalism, too, involves receiving as well as giving. You seek to get the good of the other and give to him the good you have.

Islam is inclusive in that it claims to have inherited all the true revelations revealed to the Prophets of Allah from Adam to Jesus and finally to Muhammad. It is universalist because it not only lays claim on the truth that others have but also declares that whatever it has, in fact, belongs to entire mankind. It is in this sense that Islam has been called a blessing for all human beings.

Armed with the above-mentioned inclusive –universalist ideology, the early Muslims embarked upon an all round movement for globalization. The historians, particularly the orientalist have focused more on Islamic conquests than the Knowledge movement it launched and the global civilization it sought

to establish. It is amazing to see that the Muslim conquerors felt no shame and hesitation and willingly became the disciples of the people they had conquered. They were liberal in seeking Knowledge from others and generous in giving their intellectual riches to whosoever sought to obtain them. Similarly, the early Muslims believed in what we call free trade today. Surely the civilization they built was both inclusive as well as universalist. As a result they had become the globalizing force of the time. They were indeed globalist with a deep sense of fairness and justice. As is the case with today's globalization, the globalism of the early Muslims was aided by the then developing science and technology. In fact, an ideology of globalization was at work when al-Mamun commissioned the preparation of a world map by the then experts.

The medieval Muslims, particularly the Abbasids were a great champion of what we call globalization today. They were great globalists especially in intellectual-academic matters. They believed that Knowledge was the common fund of humanity. They regarded the unknown Knowledge as their lost property and laid their claim over it

wherever they found it. They sought and obtained Knowledge from all civilizations and generously gave their own intellectual treasure to the rest of the world. They spent money on receiving Knowledge but gave it free of cost. Their approach, as can be imagined, contributed greatly in globalizing knowledge – science, technology, medicine, philosophy, language and arts etc – which later on played a key role in bringing about the modern age.

The medieval Muslims also believed in globalizing trade and commerce based on principles of justice and fairness and not on exploitation that characterizes the current globalization. Before the onset of the modern age trade was conducted both between cities as well as 'nations'. The Muslims participated greatly in both kinds of trades. They were a major partner in the trade being conducted through the famous Silk Route and had almost monopoly over sea trade. Whether between cities or countries the trade was conducted under certain fair principles which sought to eliminate exploitation and discrimination.

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