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Thought for the Month

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

Al-Quran- 39:71

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FOCUS

Political commentators and the media in the West frequently use the terms “Islamism,” “Islamist parties” and “Islamist governments” to refer to a wide range of ideological and political affiliations in the Muslim world. In a special issue on the Arab Spring, the *Economist* defined Islamism as the belief that “politics is ad must be an extension of the faith,” and adds that Islamism takes on many shades “from the blacks of al-Qaeda to the dark green of Saudi style Wahhabism to the palest of modernizing shades.” Thus, the militant al-Qaeda-affiliated groups, Tunisia’s moderate Ennahda party, the hardliner Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood and the governing parties in Malaysia and Indonesia are indiscriminately lumped together as “Islamist.” Turkey’s Justice and Development Party and Morocco’s Justice and Development Party are described as “mildly Islamist.” It may be pointed out that, like “Islamic fundamentalism,” the term “Islamism” is extremely vague, obfuscating and misleading. It fails to take cognizance of the fact that the differences between the so-called “Islamist” parties overshadow the shared beliefs. For example, if one compares the views and ideological orientations of Rachid Ghannouchi, al-Qaeda and the Salafis (who are lumped together as “Islamists”), one can scarcely fail to notice that they stand wide apart and have very little in common. Ghannouchi, head of Tunisia’s Ennahda party, has consistently argued over the past three decades that democracy and political pluralism are compatible with Islamic values and principles. He espouses a tolerant and inclusive vision of society and polity and is against the forcible establishment of an Islamic state. He is highly critical of extremism and denounces all forms of violence. On the other hand, the al-Qaeda unabashedly espouses and glorifies the cult of violence in furtherance of its goals. There is no logic or justification for joining these divergent views and ideologies under the rubric of “Islamism.”

The term “Islamism” not only beclouds our understanding of the phenomenon of Islamic resurgence in the contemporary Muslim world but also has pejorative connotations and reinforces stereotypes and prejudices against Islam and Muslims. Terms like ‘Islamism’ and ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ bristle with semantic confusion and contradictions and should therefore be avoided in political analysis. It may not be out of place to make a reference in this connection to Christian democracy, which seeks to synthesize Christian values and principles with democratic institutions. Christian democratic parties are particularly influential in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Norway and France. Ironically, while the ideology of Christian democracy has been accommodated in mainstream political discourse in the West, Western commentators and the media tend to have a negative view of political parties and government in the Muslim world which are trying to synthesize Islamic values and principles with democracy (Momin, 2013).

**From Introduction to Sociology: An Islamic Perspective by (ed.) A.R. Momin,
pp. 349-350.**

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

**IOS on-line lecture on
“IbnKhalidun: An intellectual par excellence”**

An on-line lecture on “IbnKhalidun: An intellectual par excellence” under IbnKhalidun series, was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies, here on November 30, 2020. The topic was introduced by Syed Nakhat Husain Nadwi, in-charge of Arabic section, IOS.

In his introductory remarks, he said that IbnKhalidun (May 27, 1332-March 17, 1406), was an Arab historian, who was described as a proto-scholar of the modern disciplines of historiography, sociology, economics and demography. He wrote world history titled “*Kitab al Ibar*” (Book of Lessons). He is mainly known by his *muqaddimah*, his magnum opus, he added.

Prof. Syed Jamaluddin, ex-professor of history, director, Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, JamiaMilliaIslamia and currently, director, historical research projects, IOS, who delivered the lecture, observed that IbnKhalidun was the first scholar of social sciences. Belonging to a Yemeni tribe, he started his early education with the memorisation of the Quran. He spent most of his life in South Africa. He suffered the wrath of Sultan Mohammad, and was finally executed. His last days were spent in Cairo. In 1401, he joined a military campaign against Timur and was made the Qazi of Cairo. This led to his incarceration in Cairo. *Kitab al-Ibar* was considered an all-time great work. In this book he explained the philosophy of history and was hailed as a great scholar,

respected all over the world even today. He said that IbnKhalidun described history as a philosophical study.

Prof. Jamaluddin remarked that Princeton University published a book titled *An Introduction to IbnKhalidun’s History* in 1969 for a better understanding of the theory of study of history. He propounded the theory that history waded its way through enquiry and rejected the Jewish belief that the growth of Judaism and the population of Jews grew naturally. Referring to *Al-Muqaddimah*, Prof. Jamaluddin said that it contained eight volumes, later condensed to six. Over the centuries it was condensed in two volumes in English. Finally a single-volume English translation is available today. In this book IbnKhalidun explained that

He believed that society came into existence after tribes came into being. The sense of love among human beings was a gift from Allah. He also believed that discrimination was used as a tool to attain power in politics. Prof. Jamaluddin held that IbnKhalidun’s study was not confined to history; he had an equally good understanding of what is today called economics. He referred to labour and poverty, and opined that over-taxation, bureaucratisation and the maximisation of law making led to social decline. Prof. Ibrahim of George Washington University had described IbnKhalidun as the father of economics, who attached equal importance to knowledge and education. He also dwelt on labour theory of value, surplus and micro-economics, he maintained.

Prof. Jamaluddin pointed out that according to IbnKhalidun, knowledge was of two kinds. While one was acquired by personal efforts, the second could be obtained through education. He wanted children to be educated in mathematics at the very outset. This could transform children into honest citizens. He

outlined guiding principles for early and contemporary education.

Presiding over the webinar, the secretary general, IOS, Prof. Z. M. Khan, observed that the institute may give due recognition to IbnKhalidun by undertaking research on his works as a futuristic discourse.

The webinar ended with a vote of thanks proposed by Syed Nakhat Husain Nadwi.



Prof. Syed Jamaluddin delivering the lecture

humans needed contact with others. Similarly, they required land and culture as well as civilisation were based on geographical areas. He also held that human development depended a great deal on climatic conditions. He was of the opinion that the availability of plenty of food led to the migration of population from one place to another. He said that IbnKhalidun did not have a cursory look at the system of governance but answered profound questions relating to it and formulated principles for the ruling class to sustain for longer periods.

IOS On-line Lecture based on review of ‘The Cultural Atlas of Islam’

An on-line lecture on understanding the purpose of law based on Prof. Raji al-Faruqi and Lamaya al-Faruqi’s book ‘The Cultural Atlas of Islam’ (Part-4, Chapter-14: The Law) was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies, here on November 26, 2020 that also happened to be the Law Day. Prof. M AfzalWani of delivered the lecture. He held that the Creator was the source of knowledge and the man had been tasked with the actualisation of His Will.

It should be understood in terms of the command of the Creator. Actualisation with reference to the Will meant subordination and subjugation to God. Explaining actualisation, he said that it meant actualisation of dignity, adding that the Divine should not be subjected to indignity. It should be in relation to the Creator. This established a relationship between the Creator and the creation. He observed that all human legislations stemmed from this relationship.

Prof. Wani pointed out that when one looked to the Creator, one came to the Shariah, meaning realism. When Allah gave man command, He gave man the capacity or ability to follow His Will. Allah had given sufficient life to the human being to realise it. He gave revelation to man through the Prophet (PBUH) for the sake of actualisation of His Will. A human being was supposed to look to and understand revelation. He had been invested with the power of communication which should not be in

self-interest alone. The Almighty had given human beings support. God had given them the potential, capacity and ability to actualise His Will. Thus it was incumbent on the human being to utilize and enjoy that capacity. As said in the Quran, man had been made *ashrafumakhlooqat* (superior to other creatures), he must look to the noble law. Since the Creator had given the man divine pleasure, he must make laws to maximise pleasure for others. Here lay the sense of realisation of responsibility by man. He had made the human body to enjoy pleasure, Prof. Wani said.

Prof. Wani observed that the Almighty had given humans the ability to do things. But it was up to humans to decide how to use that ability, right



Prof. M. AfzalWani delivering the lecture

or wrong way. One was born with a capacity and had also been given a responsibility towards the society to fulfill it. God expected man to do justice. He said that justice was absolute and a human being was commanded not to violate it. Everybody had a quality that could be put into plenty. It was due to the will of the Creator that one did a lot of things. Human existence was not an illusion and it was the duty of human beings to actualise the Will of the Creator.

One-day national webinar on Maulvi Mohammad Baqir: Literature, Culture and Revolt of 1857 in Historical Perspective

A one-day national webinar on “Maulvi Mohammad Baqir: Literature, culture and journalism in Delhi and the revolt of 1857 in historical perspective”, was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies, here on November 21, 2020. Chaired by former professor of history, Aligarh Muslim University, Prof. Shireen Moosvi, the inaugural session began with the recitation of a verse from the Quran by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadwi.

In his welcome address, the Secretary General, IOS, Prof. Z.M. Khan, underlined the importance of the webinar that it offered an opportunity to recall the supreme sacrifice made by earlier generations that valiantly fought against the British Empire. He described the struggle against the British as a movement in which people from every section participated. Maulvi Baqir was executed by the British government. He deserved the status of a martyr. This was the reason why IOS planned to hold a seminar on him

to acquaint the younger generation with his contribution to the cause of freedom. He said that several aspects of the period required more research.

Maulvi Baqir was one amongst those who wanted to throw off the foreign yoke.

In his introductory remarks, director of historical projects, IOS, Prof. Syed Jamaluddin, said that currently one seminar each on a national and international personality was being organised by the institute every year. Referring to the contribution of Maulvi Baqir, he observed that he (Maulvi Baqir) was an eye witness to the happenings of that

period. He connected journalism with the life of common people and raised voice against malpractices of traders through his newspaper. He also enthused people with the urge for freedom that was taking shape of a struggle in which Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs equally participated. In later decades, Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak, Gandhiji and many other leaders jumped into the fray, but the status of those who sacrificed their life was much higher. He called for understanding citizen's rights and duties, and doing everything possible to preserve the hard-won freedom.

Dr. Jagmohan Singh, a nephew of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, said that 1857 was an important landmark in the history of freedom struggle. It was a war against the East India Company which led to the end of its control over the country. Referring to the contributions of freedom fighters like Azimullah and Ajit Singh, who gave a call to fight against the British Raj in 1907, he said that it was Bhagat Singh's grandfather who asked the countrymen to shun lust for land and property. He held that Maulvi Baqir did his bit to fight the British through journalism. While Jalianwalla Bagh massacre and events of 1857 were a source of inspiration to Indians, they created fear among the British. Hindu-Muslim unity was strengthened and demonstrated by the "Lucknow Pact".

This unity was displayed in Amritsar where Dr Bashir led the Ramnaumi procession. Similarly, a langar was started at the site of Jalianwalla Bagh. He said that poems written by Brij Narayan 'Chakbast' and Dr Iqbal were on lips of many Indians. So were the inspiring couplets of Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan. Commenting on the common usage of Persian and Urdu during that

period of time, he said that his maternal grandfather was taught *Gulistan* and *Bostan* of Sheikh Saadi. He suggested that a seminar on sufi Amba Prasad, who was a friend of Ajit Singh and was executed in 1917, be organised. He said that there used to be a centre in Delhi where science was taught in Urdu medium. It was shifted to Lahore later. Science was taught in Urdu before 1857, he said.

Ashfaqullah Khan, the grandfather of martyred revolutionary, Shahid Ashfaqullah Khan observed that the martyr used his pen as a sword against the British government. Maulvi Baqir also used his pen to express the anger of the crores of

God. That conviction stood him in good stead. He said that the war of independence was not only for the sake of attaining freedom but also for uniting people.

In his keynote address, ex-head of the department of history and culture, Jamia Millia Islamia, Prof. Rizwan Qaiser, observed that the seminar had been encapsulated to make a three-day event into one. He felt that Urdu journalism did not receive as much attention as it could have been given. Masoom Moradabadi, editor of the Urdu daily *Khabardar* did make some effort in that direction. Describing print culture as a part of Delhi culture, he said that during the

150th anniversary celebrations of 1857, the name of Maulvi Baqir emerged as a journalist and editor of *Dilli Akhbar*. Urdu lithography was introduced in 1830 and Maulvi Baqir started an Urdu press. That period was also remembered for the promotion of knowledge as books on Greek and European philosophy were translated into Urdu. Delhi College took a lead in such translation as

hundreds of books were published during the period. The number of readers of books swelled because they cost less and were affordable.

Stressing the need for focusing on newspaper readership during the period, he said that Delhi had a culture of its own before 1857. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's book *Asar-us-Sanadid* (The Remnants of Ancient Heroes) played a significant role in promoting journalism. Before 1857, the tone and tenor of *Dilli Akhbar* was different. It changed post-1857. Before 1857, there was no press freedom, but post-1857, a number of newspapers were brought out and became the vehicle of free thought. He observed that Maulvi Baqir had opportunities to side with the Raj,



A view of Speakers

people against the Raj. He said that he was living in the same house where Ashfaqullah Khan lived. The lesson of nationalism was taught to him at his home which was visited by revolutionaries regularly.

Some people opposed to Hindu-Muslim unity, instigated Ram Prasad Bismil against Ashfaqullah Khan. They insisted that the fight against the British was the fight of the people belonging to a particular religion. But this did not cut much ice with the revolutionaries and both Hindus and Muslims unitedly fought against the British government's repressive policies. Before his death, Ashfaqullah Khan wrote to his mother, who was an educated woman, reminding her that the life of a man was in the hands of

but he preferred to remain with Bahadurshah Zafar.

Presiding over the session, Prof. Shireen Moosvi pointed out that the need for holding a seminar on the subject had been felt for a long time. Maulvi Baqir was misquoted as having spoken for the Muslims only. But the fact was that the maulvi called Hindu brothers and the British *mushrik* (polytheists) He used to call Hindus Aadiputra (sons of Hazrat Adam), who did not fall in the category of *Mushriks*.

She described Urdu as a symbol of national integration and the language of those who fought unitedly in the war of independence. She warned against the misguided insistence on writing Urdu in nagri script. This was being done in a bid to deal a death blow to Urdu by calling it a language spoken by soldiers of the Muslim period who came from outside (Lashkarizabaan) she concluded.

Technical Session-I

Presided over by Prof. Shireen Moosvi, the first technical session was devoted to Maulvi Baqir's life and his journalism. Presenting his profile, Shah Ajmal Farooque Nadwi, in-charge of Urdu section, IOS, said that Maulvi Baqir set up his press in 1857 and brought out Dehli Akhbar which carried important national and international news. It also carried poems of Urdu poets. He was charged with the murder of an Englishman and awarded the death sentence. Senior Urdu journalist and correspondent of Voice of America Urdu service, based in Delhi, Suhail Anjum observed that Dehli Akhbar was published from Delhi after the Urdu daily Jaane Jahaanuma brought out from Calcutta. Later on, Dehli Akhbar was renamed as Dehli Urdu Akhbar. It was Maulvi Baqir who started Urdu journalism in Delhi, he said.

Dr Asad Faisal Farooqi from AMU, held that though the revolt 1857 failed, it demonstrated Hindu-Muslim unity. Founded in 1857, Dehli Urdu Akhbar was the first Urdu newspaper in north

India. The newspaper was unique in several respects—it wrote on case of theft in Delhi and criticised the police for inaction. This newspaper carried news from different parts of the country. Maulvi Baqir was the first journalist who laid down his life for the cause of freedom, he observed.

Dr. Saifuddin Ahmed, assistant professor at Delhi university spoke on "Moulvi Mohammad Baqir and his Delhi Urdu Akhbar in the revolt of 1857: Some considerations". He said that Maulvi Baqir was the son of a prominent Shia cleric of Delhi. He went to Delhi College and later joined the revenue department. He set up a little press and started criticising the British empire. He said that the revolt in Meerut was reported in Delhi Urdu Akhbar for the first time. According to Baqir, it was a religious duty to revolt against the British Empire and unquestionably accept Bahadur Shah Zafar as the emperor of Delhi, he added.

Technical Session-II

The second technical session focused on literature, culture and the Revolt of 1857. Dr. Gulfishan Khan, associate professor of history, AMU, was the first speaker of the session who presented her paper on "The city of Shahjahanabad: Views of pre-1857 life as represented in *Asar-us-Sanadid* by Sir Syed. She said that *Asar-us-Sanadid*, a classic was published in 1878. In order to record the features of the buildings of medieval period, an archaeological society was set up in Delhi with Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as one of its members. His book was translated into French and he was made a member of Royal Academy in recognition of his services to the study of the buildings of Delhi.

Jahangirnama was first translated by Sir Syed. He collected several books in Persian, Arabic and English and was liberal in approach. This was exemplified by his conclusion that Qutub Minar was first built by Rai Pithora.

Sir Syed reproduced the Ashoka Pillar emerging, and got them translated into Urdu. He wrote the original history of Shahjahanabad, as Delhi was known at that time.

Dr Abdul Aziz, ex-associate professor of Zakir Husain College, spoke on "Muslim institutions: Jama Masjid, Dargah Mehrauli Sharif, Dargah Nizamuddin Auliya". He said that there were two madarsas, namely, Darul Baqa and Darul Shafa, near Jama Masjid. The Revolt of 1857 left a trail of mausoleums, mazars and fairs. Jama Masjid was a big cultural unit. A number of sufi saints left Delhi for other places after 1857. He said that fairs and urs celebrations generated and supported a micro-economy.

Former professor of Urdu, AMU, Prof. Tariq Chhatari, held that history had a close relationship with literature and it was the latter that became history. History was the mirror of its period and one could peep into it today. Prof. Chhatari is also an Urdu novelist whose novel *Name plate* was well received.

Writer and chronicler, Rana Safvi, presented her talk on the Phoolwaonki Sair as described in 19th century Urdu accounts. She said that Phoolwaonki Sair, or Shan-e-Gulfishan, was the result of the policy of tolerance adopted by emperor Akbar. Though the Mughal Empire shrank by the 18th century, its grandeur continued. She said that *Asar-us-Sanadid* had detailed descriptions of several buildings of Delhi, but 100 monuments still remained untouched.

Dr. Irshad Niyazi, assistant professor of history, DU, discussed the decline of social values and trade. The coffers were already emptied in the loot by Nadir Shah. Employment became a big problem for Delhities. The government that took over after 1857 started committing excesses against its subjects, he said.

Former teacher of Islamic Studies, Dr Jabin Anjum referred to Khwaja Hasan Nizami's book written in

1930 which recorded cultural and economic decline of the period. Nizami had a deep insight into the culture of Delhi, she observed.

Technical Session-III

The third technical session was devoted to the contribution of ulema, sufis, intellectuals and poets. Dr Waseem Raja, associate professor of history, AMU, initiated the discussion by focusing on “death, destruction and elimination of the House of Timur: Analysing the Revolt of 1857 from Muslim intellectuals’ perspective”. He described the revolt as a great landmark event of the 19th century. Various reports of collaborators of the British Empire needed to be gone through to understand the period. *Roznamas*, journalism, confidential reports, etc. were the main sources of the history of that time. Mirza Ghalib’s diaries and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s book, “Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind, too threw light on the events that unfolded during the period, he observed.

Dr Pervez Nazir, associate professor of history AMU, spoke on “Maulvi Mohammad Baqir an eyewitness to 1857.” The session ended with a paper presented by Prof Syed Jamaluddin on “*Haft Qulzum* (the seven seas): Reflections on Delhi’s culture in the second half of nineteenth century.” He said that the Jama Masjid was not only a place of worship but also a part of Islamic culture. Delhi was not considered inferior to the heaven. He observed that informers played a major contributory role in the destruction of Delhi.

Valedictory Session

In his concluding remarks, former head of the department of history, DU, Prof. Syed Zaheer Husain Jafri, remarked that the British used to shiver with fear on hearing about the Revolt of 1857. He said that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan wrote nothing about revolutionaries. This could be due to his plan to present his book to British rulers. He especially referred to charters passed in 1813 and 1833. While the first charter barred the

clergymen of the church from writing anything against the Prophet (PBUH) and Islam without permission, the second charter gave them freedom to write anything without seeking permission. But the journalists were not allowed the freedom of expression.

Maulvi Baqir was a mujtahid who believed that writing against the Raj was part of Tabligh. He said that the anti-colonial writers believed that the British were not invincible.

Presiding over the session ex-vice-chancellor MANUU University, Dr Mohammad Aslam Pervez, observed that he studied and taught at Delhi College, one of the oldest educational institutions of the walled city. He said that he was bringing out a science magazine in Urdu which had entered 27th year of its publication. Pleading for presenting papers in Urdu, he observed that the seminar should have been spread over three days. He felt concerned over the falling standards of research and urged the IOS to give some incentive to researchers working in the field of history.

While extending a vote of thanks, Prof. ZM Khan pointed out that the IOS tried to study diverse concerns. It was not possible to reschedule the two-year calendar. The institute had been working in several other areas, which included marginalised and weaker sections and the minorities. Research and methodology were other areas that could be taken up. He called upon researchers to come forward with their proposals assuring that the IOS would support them financially.

The webinar ended with a six-point resolution which was presented and read out by Shah Ajmal Forooque Nadwi, and approved by the secretary general.

Resolutions

The following six-point resolution was adopted at the end of the seminar.

1. Freedom is a fundamental human aspiration and right. That is the

reason why every section of Indian society fought for the country’s freedom and rested only after attaining it. Every Indian has a duty to preserve this freedom.

2. This session feels that the Institute of Objective Studies and other important academic and research institutions of the country should take up more and more research projects on culture.
3. It was also felt that a webinar/seminar on contribution of sufis and rulers to the promotion of composite Indian culture be organised in the near future.
4. Meaningful efforts should be made to ensure harmony, amity and good relations among different religious groups. Islam lays stress on the promotion of moderate approach to life and the world. This can be achieved by shunning the path of extremism and adopting a middle course. This is so because Islam believes in peace, amity and communal harmony.
5. Both small and big programmes, especially on the freedom fighters, whose services are being forgotten, should be organised.
6. The IOS will welcome with an open mind all suggestions on research relating to the issues that were discussed in the webinar. Those who are interested in it, may send in their suggestions to the IOS.

Third IOS lecture based on review of the book “Islam and Knowledge: Al-Faruqi’s concept of religion in Islamic thought”

The third lecture based on the review of the book “Islam and Knowledge: Al-Faruqi’s Concept of Religion in Islamic Thought” (edited by Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf) was organised online by the Institute of Objective Studies, here on November 17, 2020. The lecture was delivered by Prof. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi. While introducing the theme, Prof. Syed

Jamaluddin, said that the book under review was in fact a tribute by Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf, to his teacher, Prof. Raji al-Faruqi who taught him at Temple University.

In his lecture, Prof. Rafiabadi, referred to two earlier lectures in which he tried to explain al-Faruqi's views on the subject. He said that Raji al-Faruqi adopted a new approach to integrated knowledge. His concept of *Tawhid* was different from the commonly believed propositions. He touched upon various aspects of *Tawhid* and did not toe the line of 'yes' culture. The points made by al-Faruqi were a good example of modern knowledge. He observed that Prof. Faruqi left a rich intellectual legacy which was carried forward by his students, Muslims and non-Muslims.

Though Imam al-Ghazali and Shah Waliullah Dehlavi propounded a theory of *Tawhid*, yet Raji al-Faruqi's presentation was unique in more ways than one. He held that al-Faruqi led a new study of religion. The other contribution he made was the study of comparative religion by which he countered the Western ideas about Islamic thought. His students better propounded the concepts of deen or religion, and its monotheistic character as understood by Faruqi. His comparative study of religions strengthened his belief in inter-faith dialogue and international religious dialogue. He believed that Muslims did not attempt to initiate dialogue with the followers of other faiths. It was Raji al-Faruqi's idea of inter-religious dialogue that some headway was made in North America, he said.

He observed that al-Faruqi was not just a modernist, but he presented methodical inputs to the study of Islam. In his view, Islamic natural sciences were equally significant. According to Raji al-Faruqi, Islamisation was not as important as Islam as a faith. Unless faith was strengthened, Islamisation would carry no meaning. Commenting on Faruqi's concept of Islamic activism, he said

that engagement with society was basic to it. This should be made at cultural level. Elucidating his theory of integration of knowledge, Prof. Rafiabadi said that it was based on Islamic thought and approach to knowledge. To understand integration of knowledge as expounded by al-Faruqi, his works should be thoroughly studied by scholars. He said that the implications of inter-religious dialogue should be in terms of 'ought to be' and 'ought to do'. Since every religion had undergone a change, inter-religious dialogue had become incumbent to understand the commonality of thought. This necessitated further study of Raji al-Faruqi's work by future scholars. He said that inter-religious dialogue had two implications—ought to be and ought to do.

Prof. Rafiabadi maintained that al-Faruqi's approach to Islamic studies was unique and different from al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah in many ways. According to Faruqi, while revelation was the basis of religion, reason was the basis of philosophy. He was more interested in technique and methodology. The relationship among three faiths—Islam, Christianity and Judaism - was based on certain similarities and these could form a basis for the dialogue. Commenting on Faruqi's concept of *Tawhid*, he said that for him it was the very basis of human creativity.

In his presidential remarks, the secretary general of the IOS, Prof. Z. M. Khan, observed that Raji al-Faruqi was a unique scholar in several ways. He was an engaged scholar who did not sit in an ivory tower. He presented a comprehensive study of Western religions. Describing the modern age as characterised by a survival syndrome, he said that Raji al-Faruqi made the understanding of Islamic content simple against the existing cobweb of complexities. He was emphatic about not making Islam philosophical. He presented Islam as a democratic religion that could be practised in modern times.

The lecture ended with Prof. Syed Jamaluddin's vote of thanks to the attendees.

IOS online Lecture on "Education: A Way Forward"

An online lecture on "Education a way forward" was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies here on November 11, 2020 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The lecture got off to a start with the recitation of a verse from Quran by the in-charge of Urdu unit of the institute, Shah Ajmal Farooque Nadwi. Introducing the topic, assistant secretary general, Prof. Hasina Hashia paid tribute to the maulana, who as India's first education minister. Besides, he laid emphasis on science education in the country by restructuring and setting up prestigious institutions like the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) and IIT, Kharagpur.

Delivering the lecture, professor and former head of the department of history and culture, Jamia Millia Islamia, Prof. Rizwan Qaisar, observed Maulana Azad, played a seminal role in India's reconstruction. He assumed charge of the ministry of education though he was not an educationist. He was rather reluctant to take over as the union education minister when it was created in 1947. He remained in office till his death. Besides being minister of education, he looked after the ministry of natural resources. He was also in-charge of the department of science and culture as both of them were part of the ministry of education. Maulana Azad was of the view that the colonial influence on education should be lessened with the democratisation of knowledge. He observed that the maulana was an Islamic scholar who started with the reconstruction of culture with the setting up of the Sahitya Akademi (academy of letters). With this, several other academies were set up, Lalit Kala Akademi being one of them. Then he turned his attention to science and technology.

In order to promote science and put it to practical use, he revamped CSIR and set up the IIT at Kharagpur. The CSIR was made subservient to industry and several ministries made optimal use of the council, he noted.

Prof. Qaisar said that the maulana brought out the Urdu newspaper Al-Hilal in which indigenous and oriental sources of Islamic knowledge prominently figured. In 1917, he established Madarsa Islamia in Ranchi where he spent about three years. At the madarsa in Ranchi, he introduced modern curriculum of education which included science, geography, mathematics, English etc. Al-Hilal was launched to promote journalism. The madarsa had a secular character as a large number of Hindus too studied there. Rai Sahib of Ranchi was one such philanthropist who generously contributed to the development of the madarsa.

He established another madarsa during the Khilafat movement. Inspired by Gandhiji, he adopted the spinning wheel (charkha) and used to spin thread. He observed that Maulana Azad was persuaded by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to join his cabinet as minister of education. His interest in education could be illustrated by the fact that a committee was appointed to examine if education could be put in the concurrent list of the Constitution. The committee recommended against the move. During his tenure as a cabinet minister, the literacy rate was 15 percent and only one percent of the GDP was spent on education. He used

to say that after food and shelter, education was the third most important need of an individual. He always laid emphasis on the education of children, adults and rest of the population, Prof. Qaisar noted.

He regretted that there was serious dearth of intellectuals at that time. With a view to filling this gap, the maulana pleaded that education must be made compulsory like conscription. He wanted every educated person to spend at least one day in a week to teach children. This fitted into the dictum "Each one, teach one". He wanted higher education to be qualitative. Maulana Azad was also concerned about education in the field of science and technology. Keeping this in view, he set up the University Education Commission, headed by Dr. S Radhakrishnan.

He observed that among other things that the maulana did was to bring fine art and performing arts under Lalit Kala Akademi. Sangeet Natak Akademi was created to promote music and art. This was aimed at unifying India's cultural diversity. Indian Council for Cultural Relations was also set up with the same purpose. He was responsible for opening a cultural section at the Indian embassy in Cairo, Egypt. More such offices were opened in other Indian embassies later. The University Grants Commission (UGC) set up by him was still working though there was much talk in the air to replace it.

Secretary General IOS Prof. Z. M. Khan recalled his meeting with the

maulana at the youth festival in 1957 and later at his official residence over a cup of tea. He described the maulana as a top-rank Islamic scholar who changed himself according to time. He was a modern man who developed his own style and philosophy.

In his presidential remarks, former professor, CSRD, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Prof. M H Qureshi, pointed out that the nation had forgotten the maulana for several years. It was after a long period that his birthday on 11th November was declared as 'national education day'. He was a scholar who penned more than 10 books on various subjects. He was awarded the country's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna in 1992. He was the first post-Independence India's minister who handled an important portfolio like education. He had a vision about education in free India. He said the universities of Allahabad, Bombay and Madras were established in accordance with Macaulay's idea of education. Maulana Azad appointed Dr. Zakir Husain to recast education. In order to give a fillip to higher education, he appointed the noted scientist Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar as chairman of the first education commission.

At the end, Prof. Hasina Hashia proposed a vote of thanks to the participants.

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