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Thought for the Month

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

Al-Quran- 6: 29-30

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FOCUS

The role of libraries in the preservation and transmission of knowledge is widely known as acknowledged. From the first century of the Islamic era, the Islamic world witnessed a vast network of private and public libraries. These libraries were set up by scholars, wealthy individuals and rulers. Most of the large mosques in the various cities of the Islamic world had large collections of books on Islamic disciplines. In the middle of the first century of the Hijrah, Abd al-Hakam ibn Amr al-Jumahi established a public library which had a large collection of books with free access to the public. Around the same time, there came up the library of ibn abi Laylah, which contained only copies of the Quran. People used to gather there for recitation. Ali ibn Yahya (d. 275/888) had a large personal library, which was popularly known as *Khazanah al-Hikmah* (Treasure of Wisdom). People from distant regions used to go there to refer to books. In Mawsil, Jafar ibn Muhammad al-Mawsili (d. 323/935) founded an academy to which a library was attached. Scholars and students had free and open access to it. They were also provided with free supply of paper.

Kings, rulers and nobles vied with one another to set up public libraries and to patronize learning. Add al-Dawlah (rules 367-372/977-983) set up a public library in Shiraz. It was very well organized with a director, assistant director and inspector. It also had a well-maintained catalogue of books. Similar libraries soon sprang up in Basrah, Rayy, Karkh, and other cities of the Islamic world. In Egypt, the Fatimid rulers set up a chain of educational institutions and public libraries. One of them had the reputation of being the largest in the Islamic world. It had a vast collection of books on the various sciences, which were stored in forty large rooms. The library had twelve hundred copies of ibn Jarir al-Tabari's celebrated work on history. In 395/1004, the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim built an academy in Cairo, which was known as *Dar al-Hikmah*. The library, which was attached to the academy, had over a million books. It had a reading room as well as rooms for lectures and meetings. The Fatimid vizier Yaqub ibn Killis founded an academy with an attached library. The vizier used to spend a thousand dinars a month on the maintenance of the library.

Andalusia or Muslim Spain earned an enviable reputation as a key centre of learning and scholarship as well as arts and architecture. Al-Hakam II (ruled 961/976/1553-1568), the ruler of Andalusia, had scholarly interests. He set up a splendid library at Cordoba which had four hundred thousand books. The catalogue of the library comprised forty volumes. In comparison, the most famous library in Christian Spain at this time, which was located in the Repoll monastery, had only one hundred and ninety two books. Al-Hakam II appointed several people with a specific duty to collect manuscripts or copies of important and rare books from Andalusia as well as from Egypt and Baghdad. He also appointed scholars for this purpose. He used to offer rewards and prizes to authors and scholars. He offered one thousand dinar to Abul Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 967/1559) in order to get the first completed and autographed copy of his celebrated book *Kitab al-Aghani*.

From Islam and the Promotion of Knowledge by (ed.) A.R. Momin, pp. 64-65.

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

Five-day online IOS Winter School Programme in Islamic Studies

The Institute of Objective Studies hosted a five-day Winter School Programme in Islamic Studies here from January 5 to 9, 2021 to impart basic, but deep knowledge to university students pursuing professional disciplines like, graduation and masters in business studies, science, computer science, engineering, medicine etc. The core courses included Islam as faith and civilisation, Revelation and its application (focus on sources of Shariah that led to the emergence of Fiqh), fundamentals of Islam, Islamic sciences, Islam and knowledge, non-Muslims in Islam and Muslim history, Islam and multiculturalism, non-Muslims in the Arab Islamic world, non-Muslims in the Arab Muslim world, non-Muslims under Muslim rule in India, globalisation: definition and critique, Islam and modernity/westernisation, Islam and secularism, Islam and terrorism, Islam and sectarianism, Islam and the contemporary world, Islam and liberation movements and Islamic state in the modern world.

The inaugural session began with the welcome address by the Secretary General, IOS, Prof. Z.M. Khan, who also highlighted its activities. He held that earlier, the institute used to highlight futuristic programmes, but its area of activities grew manifold with the passage of time. IOS was a non-political, non-profitmaking and non-governmental organisation which

focused on research on the marginalised sections and minorities, especially Muslims. It was creditable for an NGO like the IOS to work against unfavourable conditions. Explaining the work being undertaken in the field of research, he said that themes were introduced on which research projects were invited. Themes were diversified but they were generally focused on marginalised sections, minorities and depressed sections. Engagement of the youth was another area which caught the attention of the Institute. The idea behind engaging the youth was to develop a scientific temper in them to neutralise the effect of myth that was deep rooted. He said that scientific temper

Scholarships were awarded to needy and meritorious students pursuing doctoral research. Madarsa-educated students were encouraged to take admission in universities. Special lectures on the themes in different areas were organised. IOS calendar was popular because of its value in terms of data. IOS had a well-equipped library and a database. The Institute had five chapters that reflected the regional aspirations of the people. It also regularly published several magazines, he added.

Introducing the topic, the finance secretary, IOS, Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish, observed that Islamic studies was different from theology. Islamic studies was inclusive of theology

which only studied god (theo). In order to make it broad-based, translation of texts became a necessity. He said that the Syrian language was translated into Arabic by Arabs and this work was unparalleled in the history of knowledge. Muslims contributed a lot to mathematics. Islamic studies was a part of social sciences. He opined that despite much scope, no

significant headway in the study of Islam was made between 16th and 20th centuries. In the 19th century, Muslims by and large engaged themselves in opposing colonialism. But things changed during the last 29-30 years with the changes that took place in the mode of communication, like the Net, IT etc. This revolution in the field of communication made the world multicultural. Earlier in the Indian sub-continent, Sanskrit, Pali, etc., were the language of scholarship. But, in the last three decades, a sustained movement was launched to use English as a language to improve the image of Islam that was negatively presented by Western scholars. This



A view of the Speakers

was nothing but the establishment of relationship between cause and effect. Listing other activities, he noted that there was a publication division which had so far published about 400 titles on various subjects. A translation bureau was in place to get books translated on various topics into Urdu, English and Hindi. The institute also conducted surveys on issues of topical importance. One such survey was conducted to ascertain the preference of young voters. Besides, organisation of national and international seminars, symposia and workshops was a regular feature. IOS also sought cooperation of institutions in India and abroad to coordinate with its activities.

might be due to the lack of teaching of religion in universities. He observed that in Muslim families, children read the Quran without understanding its meaning. Culture and religion were two different things. So many traditions were without knowing what Islam said about them. He said that the image of Islam was sought to be damaged in the wake of the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. Propaganda against Islam intensified thereafter. In order to put Islam and Muslims in proper perspective, summer camps on Islamic studies were organised in Europe. It needed to be replicated in India too where many professionals, both Muslims and non-Muslims, did not understand Islam, *risalat* and *tawhid*. They put several questions regarding Islam and more often than not, misunderstood it. Social, cultural and economic landscape underwent a significant change after World War I. Many problems cropped up after the World War II and Muslim scholars responded to them. Globalisation was another issue that would be discussed, besides Islam and modernity, Islam and secularism, he concluded.

In his presidential remarks, Prof. Z.M. Khan, observed that it was the paradigms that decided how to go about Islamic way of life. Islam tried to explain spiritual and moral life since it was not utilitarian. He said that Islam contributed immensely to the onward march of civilisation. He laid stress on the need for *Ilme Din* (religious knowledge), *Ilme Duniya* (worldly knowledge) and *Ilme Asari* (contemporary knowledge).

Business Session I

The first business session began with a lecture on Islam as faith and

civilisation by Prof. Ishtiaque Danish who explained the niceties of the topic. The session ended with questions from the audience and their answers.

Business Session II

Business Session II had two lectures. While the first speaker was Prof. Md. Fahim Akhtar Nadwi, professor of Islamic Studies, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, who spoke on revelation and its application: focus on the Quran and Sunnah as sources of Shariah, which led to emergence of Fiqh, the second lecture was delivered by Prof. M. Ishaq on *tawhid*, *risalat* and *akhirat*.

January 6, 2021 (Second day)

Business Session III



A view of the Speakers

The third business session had three lectures. The first lecture was delivered by Dr. Md. Arshad, who spoke on *Jama wa Tadween Quran*. This was followed by a lecture on *Jama wa Tadween Hadith* which was delivered by Dr. Waris Mazhari. Third and the last lecture of the session was delivered by Prof. Ishtiaque Danish on globalisation: Definition and impact.

Business Session IV

The fourth business session too had three lectures. While the first lecture was delivered by Prof. Abdur Rashid

Bhat, who focused on Islam and knowledge, the second lecture was delivered by Prof. Ishtiaque Danish, who spoke on Arab-Muslim contribution to medicine. The last lecture of the session centered on Arab-Muslim contribution to mathematics. Dr. Zaki Kirmani was the speaker.

January 7, 2021 (Third day)

Business Session V

The first lecture of the session was delivered by Prof. Abdul Majid Khan, who spoke on Muslim contribution to humanities and social sciences. Director of IOS history projects, Syed Jamaluddin was the last speaker of the session who dwelt on Islam and multiculturalism.

Business Session VI

The sixth business session had three lectures, beginning with one on non-Muslims during the time of the Prophet (PBUH) by Prof. Obaidullah Fahad. This was followed by the second lecture on non-Muslims under Muslim empires by Syed Jamaluddin. The third and the last lecture of the session was delivered by Prof. Hamid Naseem

Rafiabadi on Islam and multiculturalism: modern debate and Islamic position on the subject.

January 8, 2021 (Fourth day)

Business Session VII

The first lecture was focused on Islam and terrorism by Prof. Mirza Asmer Beg. While the second lecture on non-Muslims under the Muslim empires - Umayyads of Spain, Abbasids and the Ottomans - was delivered by Dr. Waris Mazhari, the third and the last lecture centered on non-Muslims in the Arab-Islamic world (Syria, Lebanon and Egypt). The

speaker on the topic was Dr. Md. Arshad.

Business Session VIII

The first lecture of the eighth business session began with Prof. Waseem Raja speaking on non-Muslims under Muslim empires. It was followed by a lecture by Prof. Md. Fahim Akhtar Nadwi, who spoke on the development of Fiqh. The third and the last lecture of the session was delivered by Prof. Ishtiaque Danish, who spoke on globalisation and Islam.

January 9, 2021 (Fifth day)

Business Session IX

The first lecture of the ninth session focused on Islam and modernity/westernisation and was delivered by Prof. Arshi Khan, professor of political science, AMU, while Prof. Z.M. Khan spoke on Islam and secularism in the second lecture. The third lecture, on non-Muslims during the time of the Prophet (PBUH), was delivered by Prof. Abdur Rashid Bhat.

Business Session X

The fourth lecture of the day was delivered by Prof. Ishtiaque Danish, who spoke on Islam and liberation movements. While the fifth lecture had Prof. Obaidullah Fahad as the speaker on Islamic state in the modern world, the sixth and the last lecture of the session was delivered by Prof. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, who spoke on non-Muslims in modern Islamic state: citizens or *ahle-kitab*.

Valedictory Session

The concluding session began with keynote address by Prof. Omar Hasan Kasule, secretary general, International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), USA, who spoke on the way ahead: regenerating knowledge in Islamic perspective. In his speech, he said that discussing the ideas was important because it led to social change. He presented 20 definitions of knowledge which were either European or Islamic.

Referring to the European definition of knowledge, he observed that Western thinkers justified belief in wrong and right. However, some modern thinkers insisted that if belief was true then knowledge would be true. Commenting on the Islamic definition, he noted that knowledge was true in contrast to lack of knowledge. There were two beliefs—*Ilmul yaqeen* and *Haqqul yaqeen*, with the latter being higher than the former. Explaining degrees of knowledge, he referred to progression in knowledge and said that according to the Quran, humans could have knowledge. The Quran asserted existence of the knowledge of divine source. This debunked epistemic skepticism about human knowledge and was rejected by the Quran. Quranic terminology about knowledge was *maarifa-arifa*, *ilm*, *yaqin*, *hikma* and *basirat*. The Quran used terms like *ra'ay* and *tadkhira* for knowledge. He held that *laib*, or *jehal* was opposite of knowledge. *Shakk*, or doubt, was part of it. Dhann referred to the doubtful and uncertain knowledge that was higher than *shakk*. Similarly, *baatil* was used to refer to falsehood. While European secular epistemology denied revelation, Islamic divine epistemology focused on sources. This knowledge could be innate or acquired. Integrated epistemology re-integrated *wahy* as a source of knowledge, he added.

Prof. Kasule also discussed sources of knowledge. He said that reason (*aql*) was a secondary source of knowledge. *Aql* could cover both rational and empirical knowledge. Then there were doubtful sources of knowledge like *Ilm ladunny* inspiration, *ilham*, intuition, natural instincts, dreams, Sufis, talk of *kashf*, magic and sorcery. He observed that *Ilm naqli* could be the basis for science and technology. He held that the Quran mentioned scientific facts as a motivation for research. Holding that extremism was an epistemological problem, he said that extremism was a failure to use both sources of knowledge in balance.

Liberal understanding of texts of *naql* and failure was to see the time dimension. Out of context use of *wahy* or reason led to extreme use. It also led to confusion of right vs. wrong with true vs. false, or legal vs. illegal. He maintained that extremism was an epistemological problem. Commenting on the history of knowledge, he said that human knowledge grew by message through prophets and human experience. The Quran emphasised on empirical knowledge by observing our bodies and the cosmos. Muslim impact on Europe in terms of knowledge could be seen in Renaissance, Reformation, scientific revolution, agricultural revolution, industrial revolution and economic/knowledge revolution, he noted.

Prof. Kasule observed that Muslims faced the challenge to excel in knowledge, research and development. Thus looking for knowledge was the duty of every Muslim. We could achieve what our ancestors achieved. There was the need for motivation to excel in education and learning motivated philosophy of integrating knowledge. He said that knowledge should be for all humanity. He also spoke on the principles of Fiqh (*qawaid*) in research *dharar* (harm) and *maslahat* (benefit). He said that harm must be removed. Shariah was revealed to fulfill the 5 purposes of law (*maqasid*). Harm could not be removed by a similar harm. Prevention of harm should be effected before accruing a benefit. He expressed the confidence that the future was going to be better for the world.

In his special mention, Prof. Z.M. Khan, observed that the IOS would take full advantage of Prof. Kasule's speech. The institute would put forward the proposals to other bodies for formulating new plans and schemes. He said that the ideas contained in the speech needed to be popularised by means of regular exchange of men and material among chapters of the Institute. He held that the institute was trying to reach people

through its chapters because they were a precious part of our heritage. Projects based on these ideas would have to be taken by all stakeholders—IOS and other Islamic institutions and universities. Updating of our knowledge in the light of the Quran and Sunnah was necessary because India was ripe for making new strides in knowledge. As used in the Quran, furqan should be cultivated and taken into account while conducting and guiding research. He also called for articulating intellectual heritage and knowledge capital.

In his presidential remarks, the chairman, IOS, Dr. Mohammed Manzoor Alam, pointed out that Prof. Kasule's speech would be helpful in furtherance of research. This was the second programme of the series which would continue in future as well. He laid emphasis on working on plural epistemological aspects as Allah created human life to benefit the world. Thus it required dialogues to resolve issues of different nature. Human being was an honourable creature of the Almighty which should ensure equality and foster fraternity among races and religions. Justice was the cornerstone for the good of the world. He stressed the need for thinking over the nature of time and the nature of knowledge. Nature of time was susceptible to change and knowledge should be used to resolve problems. Since Muslims were the torch-bearers of the Quran and Islam, research methodology from Quranic point of view should be adopted while dealing with issues, he concluded.

At the end of the session, Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish proposed a vote of

thanks. He said that the lectures delivered in the five-day programme were beneficial for participants who came from different streams—science, commerce, business management, arts, etc. In all, as many as 26 lectures were delivered with more than 100 scholars participating in it.

IOS second on-line lecture on parallels between Aligarh Movement and other Muslim reform movements

An on-line lecture on “Drawing parallels between the 19th century Aligarh movement of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Muslim reform movements



Prof. Waseem Raja delivering the lecture

across Muslim societies: An analysis” under Ibn Khaldun lecture series was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on December 30, 2020. The lecture marked the centenary celebrations of the founding of Aligarh Muslim University. The lecture started with the recitation of a Quranic verse by Hafiz Athar Husain Nadwi.

Introducing the topic, Prof. Syed Jamaluddin, director, historical research projects, IOS, observed that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a gigantic figure in education. He was a forward-looking educationist, versatile writer and journalist. Sir Syed occupied a place of prominence in global Muslim perspective, he said.

In his lecture, associate professor of medieval history in AMU, Dr. Waseem Raja, held that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a global intellectual and thinker of the 19th century. He personally saw the revolt of 1857 and the events that unfolded thereafter. Those were tough times for the British Raj in India. The period of Muslim rule that began with the conquest of Mohammad bin Qasim ended after about 888 years. As a person with Muslim background, Sir Syed peeped into the Western world with a keen eye on the changes that were taking place globally.

That was the time when Western powers were emerging on the political firmament of Europe. Italy and other powers had blocked the way of Turkey after its defeat in Constantinople. This drastically changed the scenario. Muslim scholarship was being replaced by Western thought. By the 19th century, the Islamic world faced many challenges from the West. The

Ottoman Empire that covered vast swathes of Central Asia and Europe could not withstand Western onslaughts.

The clash of civilisations that started in the 19th century could be explained in the Indian context as well. All privileges, power and pelf enjoyed by the Muslims were lost due to European Christian conquests. In India, rulers were defeated by the British. By the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire had shrunk and Muslims faced defeat everywhere. The global change also impacted the Muslim world significantly. He said that gloom had set in Turkey as well as

in India with the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Dr. Raja observed that a puritanical movement was started in India by a set of Muslim scholars to end the corruption that pervaded Muslim community. The Wahabi movement as also other movements began to mobilise the community against the Christian European suzerainty. This was a group of Islamic scholars who wanted to introduce reforms strictly in accordance with religious texts.

Simultaneously, a liberal reform movement began with the same vision but a little different politically, sometimes militarily or in other ways. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan belonged to this spectrum of thinkers. They veered round to devising a new approach to cooperate with the British, without submitting to them. They believed that resort to extreme orthodoxy would be regressive. There were several theatres of action in terms of pan-Islamism to restore the old glory of Islam and Muslims.

This necessitated reinterpreting the Quran in the new international context. Emphasis was laid on the presentation of a rationalistic interpretation of the Quranic text. The logic was that while the Quranic text should remain the same, the meaning and interpretation had to be more exhaustive and explanatory. This resulted in many interpretations of the Quran and today their number had gone up to about 1700. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan also belonged to the same class of Muslim scholars. Sir Syed often referred to Syed Jamaluddin Afghani, another reformer of the age who wanted to restore the glory of Islam and dignity of Muslims worldwide.

Dr. Raja said that the Arabian peninsula witnessed a renaissance. They wanted reform in moribund Muslim societies. There were several Muslim scholars who championed the cause of Arab Islamic world. The emergence of Russia as a great power

in Central Asia in the 18th century added a new dimension to the scenario. Much of Central Asia, that had been populated and ruled by Muslims, fell into Russian hands.

Central Asian scholars wanted a *jadid* (modernising) movement to awaken Muslim society from slumber that had set in following defeat by Russian forces. In that larger Indian and international context, the Aligarh movement was a huge effort to adjust to the new situation and positively engage with it. The movement was focused on the education of Muslims who had stuck to old pattern of education. The protagonists of this movement attacked the closed system of madarsa education whose curricula did not take cognizance of the scientific and technological advances. He observed that at the close of the 19th century, the Indian sub-continent became a theatre of action. Eighteenth century Muslim scholars like Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz were rationalists who had a committed following of up to 50,000 each, besides their influence on virtually the entire Muslim population of India. This century was full of writings of Islamic scholars who produced a rich literature.

Sir Syed firmly believed that if Muslims did not become progressive, they would be doomed to failure. He was also of the view that whatever was written in the Quran must concern everyday life of Muslims. He wanted Muslim men of action. He used to say that change could be brought only with modern education. Dr. Raja said that Sir Syed served as a symbol of Indian Muslims. He quoted a Christian scholar who described Sir Syed as “a man of global inter-faith” (leadership). Sir Syed advocated inter-faith harmony by dining with Christians. He added that the first generation of Aligarhians, which included scholars like Allama Shibli Nomani and Saifuddin Kichlu, championed the cause of Sir Syed with great

enthusiasm. It was due to their efforts that the British rulers’ attitude towards Muslims softened in many ways. He concluded by observing that the confrontationists did not succeed in their bid to antagonise the British against the Muslims.

Prof. Syed Jamlauddin noted that the lecture fitted well into the centenary celebrations of the founding of AMU. He said that Sir Syed encouraged inter-faith dialogue and set an agenda of Islamic modernity. Unfortunately, his dream could not be fulfilled during his lifetime.

Secretary general, IOS, Prof. Z M Khan, in his observations praised Dr. Raja for covering a vast area and for explaining the ideas of Sir Syed. He said that those ideas were more relevant today. His abiding relevance lay in dealing thoughtfully with the past and present of the Muslim community. That was the corner stone for future development. Inter-faith dialogue was an important area to face the challenges posed by communalism in India. Sir Syed wanted to create awakening among Muslims and hinted at ways to deal with the new situation. He said that Sir Syed was “highly modern” in that sense.

Presiding over the event, the vice-president of IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, quoted Ibn Khaldun who said that the past was the future. He said that Sir Syed was acquainted with global happenings. Though there were several hindrances before him, he guided not only India, but also the world. His message of sustenance and better use of technology had come true in the present context. He started with a scratch but built up an institution that attracted talent from different parts of the world. He stressed that Sir Syed’s ideas must be researched in leading world universities like Oxford and Cambridge, because they were not only for the Muslims but also for the world community.

At the end, Prof. Syed Jamaluddin extended a vote of thanks to the participants.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

CALICUT CHAPTER

Six-day Winter School Opens in Calicut

A six-day winter school (January 1-6, 2021) run by the Calicut chapter of Institute of Objective Studies was formally opened by EM Abdul Rahman, Chairman, Empower India Foundation Bangalore. Such endeavours of IOS are very much to be appreciated as the Muslim community in India is facing great cultural and political threats, said EM Abdul Rahman said in his inaugural speech. There are three forms of knowledge that empower the Muslims and revealed knowledge is the foremost among them, he added. He appealed to graduates and undergraduates attending the winter school to learn and interpret Islamic teachings using modern perspectives for the benefit of humanity.

Dr. A.I Wilayatullah, department of Collegiate Education Kerala in his talk on "Islam, Faith and Civilisation" brought the attention of participants to the ongoing tussle between East and West and observed that Allah enjoins the believers to read, at least five times in the Quran. It is no surprise that Madina, the city of the Prophet, was also the city of light and it was a beacon of truth to the world, including the West, which was mired in darkness, superstitions and ignorance.

We witness a knowledge explosion in the Arab lands with the advent of the Prophet and we see new cities coming up where liberal intellectualism has opened new avenues to the people of all classes. We, he said, see the river fronts of

Baghdad bustling with new ideas, theories and agreements. Though dormant now, that intellectualism is still alive among the Muslims. The challenge is to restore the dynamism of thought and action.

Talking about skill development, Aslam Perambra, a management consultant, detailed the basic principles of skill development.

Prof. Abdul Rahman Baqavi, the principal of Sathyasarani College, Manjeri, in his highly enlightening talk on the Quran said the holy book alone starts with command to read. He narrated the story of the prophets and noted that every prophet in Islam was taking the people to the idea of freedom and self-respect. Both are God-given rights no ruler or potentate can deny. The Quran is the yardstick that a believer can use to separate truth from untruth.

The response to the announcement about the winter school was overwhelming. The chapter had to restrict the intake to 40 participants taking students northern districts only.

IOS Winter School at Calicut concludes on a high note of confidence and hope

The six-day Winter School learning programme concluded yesterday with the participants registering hope and confidence in their academic pursuit and thanking the IOS for giving them an opportunity to absorb new vision about Islam and the positive role Muslims could play in reshaping the world.

The school only catering to graduates and postgraduates from northern districts of Kerala, due to the pandemic, included lectures, discussions and interactive sessions guided by academics and trainers.

Khalid Musa Nadvi, professor at Islamiyya College Kuttady, in his lecture on *Islamisation of Knowledge* discussed in detail the contribution of late Dr. Ibrahim Raji al-Faruqi to the serious necessity of rethinking knowledge coming from the West. He said the fountainhead of true knowledge is Allah and His message works as parameters to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Modern knowledge however is the product mostly of Western thinkers and intellectuals who refused to acknowledge revealed knowledge. Islam wants to merge human intellect with real life problems and urges believers to work for spiritual enlightenment, readiness to fight for justice and equity and intellectual uplift. Islamisation of knowledge is the first step towards transformation of our worldview.

Dr. Hussain Randathani, a historian of note, talking about *Contribution of Islam to Humanities and Social Sciences* said Islam in history is lesson for people of the present. Islam incorporated local and traditional symbols of cultural behaviour and removed vestiges of polytheism and idolatry from human life. Sufism played a major role in this process without diluting the fundamentals of Thouhid. Zainuddeen Makhdum, who first wrote about the victory of Muslims over the Portuguese invaders, was also spiritual in his approach to history as were some great Indian warriors of Islam.

NP Chekkutty, a reputed senior journalist, who opened the activities on the third day, narrated how a secular outsider viewed Islam and Muslims in the state. Islam was not a foreign religion in the past, said he, and like Christianity it was embraced by the toiling class living in the coastal regions. Islam brought about major changes in the habits of Keralites right from food to clothing. The word *kafir* was seen mainly in British writings and it was used as a tool to divide the

society on religious lines. However, present-day Muslim community seems to face a clash of civilisations as its members are becoming closed and withdrawn.



A P Kunhamu, a prominent writer and commentator, underlined the multiplicity of thoughts in modern Islam and pointed out that the divisions among different sects is mainly the handiwork of disruptive forces working inside and outside. The basics of Islamic faith are unity of God, out of which derives concepts like equity, equality and justice. Modern Islamic thought needn't be disruptive, but be part of the efforts to relate Islam to new intellectual challenges. For instance, Islamic feminism may be described as an attempt to relocate women in Muslim community from an obedient homemaker to one who is vocal and active in the society. It is interesting to note that Indian Muslim women are in the forefront of fight against the new draconian citizenship law.

Dr Ashraf Kalpetta, Dr Abdulla Manima, C Abdul Hameed, C Dawood, Sajjad Vaniyambalam, Aslam Permbra and CK Rashid were some other resource persons who dealt with topics like Higher Objectives of Sharia, Islamophobia, Principles of Leadership etc. There were interactive sessions and field surveys in addition to lectures.

The school concluded with a motivational speech laced with inspiring references to life and times of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), by Ilyas Moulavi of Santapuram Islamiya College.

IOS Calicut Chapter's Webinar on "Problems of Expression of Women's Identity"

The IOS Centre for Gender Studies organised a webinar on October 31, 2020 at Thiruvananthapuram under the banner "Who am I?" The participants in the webinar discussed the Problems of Expression of Identity of Women.

Ms. Sheena Sadiq joint convener of the programme, in her welcome speech said that the Centre was involved in the study and analysis of gender issues and the programme "Who am I?" tried to provide a platform for expression of identity of women drawn from several sectors, from professionals to labourers. Their experience would help understand the problems faced by women and inspire women at large. Ms. S Bushra, who presently manages the research project of the Centre named "Transformation and Empowerment of Muslim Women", presided over the programme. In her presidential remarks she pointed out that although there had been discussions and debates about gender issues at global level, Kerala women were not much informed about the problems of gender identity. The caste system with numberless castes and subcastes kept them from serious study of gender issues. She pressed upon the need for serious academic

study of the subject. Ms. Shahida Kamal, member of Kerala Women's Commission, inaugurated the webinar. In her inaugural address Ms. Shahida Kamal said that the question "who am I?" had become very relevant in social and cultural discussions in the state. "Our attempt to answer this delicate question may open new avenues and opportunities for women. It will help women recognise their identity and empower them to take part in the comprehensive development of weaker sections of society". She invited the delegates' attention to the decline of awareness among men about gender equity and justice, which she said was not proper for a state known for intellectual advancement. Mr. S.V. Vibhu, of Kerala Police, a specialist in cybercrimes, discussed in detail the nature of cybercrimes against women and the preventive measures to be taken to stop such crimes. Ms. Beena R (gender programme manager, KudumbaSree Project Kollam), Dr. Sreekala (writer, dancer and activist, Kollam), Ms. Anju Punnath, (artist and administrator, Norkaroots, Thiruvananthapuram) were among the panelists. There were around 100 participants and many of them reflected on the theme. Mahroofa P, a writer, proposed a vote of thanks.

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