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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 your?” 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

All minorities inhabiting India have their legal affiliation with the country in two ways: as individuals; and as members of a particular group professing a distinct religion. In their first mentioned capacity constitutional recognition comes to every minority as a citizen of India. Part II of the Constitution deals with citizenship and says that whosoever fulfils the conditions laid down in that part “Shall be a citizen of India”. In the second mentioned capacity who is as a group professing a distinct religion constitutional recognition comes to minority as a ‘religious denomination’ (Articles 26 and 27) and as a ‘minority based on religion’ (Article 30 clauses 1 and 2). Another noteworthy feature of the Indian Constitution is that although it declares India in its Preamble to be a ‘secular democratic republic’ it gives recognition to all religions professed by citizens of India and also gives recognition to group identities as such. More importantly, the Constitution makes it abundantly clear through Article 15, clauses (1) and (2), that no citizen of India will be discriminated against by the State on the ground of religion he professes nor he will be subjected to any disability on that score. On the basis of the above provisions of the Indian Constitution, it is clearly established that every minority of India is individually a part of the Indian nation and all minorities of India, being members of a distinct religious community, which together with other religious communities constitute the Indian nation, collectively also form part of the nation. It is significant to point out that except for the Preamble, the word nation has nowhere been used in the Constitution in relation to ‘the people of India’. Moreover, the Indian Constitution does not list all the religious communities which together form the Indian nation. In two specific contexts it mentions Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists by name—Explanations 1 and 2 to Article 25 (2) (b) — but, it is just incidental and does not mean that those following any religion other than those named are in any degree excluded from the Indian nationhood.

It has been rightly observed that “it would have been a blunder on the part of the makers of our Constitution if, they had omitted to make any special provisions for the socially and economically backward communities, for, the democratic march of a nation would be impossible if those who are handicapped are not aided.” Indeed, the principle of democratic equality as outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution can work successfully only if the entire nation is brought on the same level, as far as practicable.

Taking into cognizance this objective, the founding-fathers of the Indian Constitution prescribed certain temporary measures to help the backward sections to come up to the same level with the rest of the nation as well as certain permanent safeguards for the protection of the cultural, linguistic and similar rights of any section of the community who might be said to constitute a ‘minority’ from the numerical, not communal point of view, in order to prevent the democratic machine from being used as an engine of oppression by the numerical majority.

From *We, the Minorities of India* by Prof. Z.M. Khan and S.N. Yadav, pp. 29-31

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS and CDPP jointly organises webinar on Growth of the Muslim Middle Class in India

The Institute of Objective Studies, in association with the Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP), Hyderabad, organised a webinar on Growth of the Muslim Middle Class in India on September 17, 2021.

Introducing the topic, the assistant secretary general, IOS, Prof. Haseena Hashia said that Muslims constituted a very important segment of society. They equally contributed to the country's GDP and job creation. The Muslim community was also the shock absorber of society. The rate of literacy among Muslims had increased. They were also catching up with the expansion of education. Tourism in several states had economically improved their standard of living. Though there was an increase in their income yet they had not reached the level of upper class. The community's status has improved after Independence but not at the level that was envisaged, she noted.

Former bureaucrat and a member of the Planning Commission, Dr. Naresh Chandra Saxena explained that a middle class person earned Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 a month. That was the yardstick to measure the income of this class, though no independent opinion about Muslim middle class could be formed due to the lack of specific data. He called for making the middle class to lead in every field.

Dr. Amir Ullah Khan, member of the board of governors at the Digital Empowerment Foundation, Gyan Shaala and Welham Girls School pointed out that some compelling data on socio-economic condition of the Muslims was available. He admitted that there was leadership vacuum among Muslims. A general decrease in

the Muslim middle class had been noticed. Thus there was need to have a look at the data during the last 4-5 years, he said. Professor in the school of development studies, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, Abdul Shaban, observed that there were several areas that needed to be discussed by the academics. He viewed the absolute as declining and moving to relative poverty. This was due to the existence of lower classes in middle class. Referring to the role of bourgeois class, he said that this was important for the enlightenment in Europe. Role of this class was also evident in India. Instead of consumption based, Indian society was asset-based. That was the reason why the economists adopted consumption expenditure-based approach. In the case of Muslims, they spent more on source of protein than Hindus. While the former depend on meat as a source of protein, the Hindus went in for other vegetarian sources. Various criteria had been used to estimate the middle class with one of them being developed by the Nobel Laureates, Prof. Abhijeet Banerjee and Esther Duflo. Asset based approach postulated that it was pucca houses that determined the status of the middle class. In 1990 telephone became important to measure the middle class. Commenting on the growth of middle class, he said that in 1998-99 its size stood at 20.2 per cent but rose to 44.6 per cent in 2015-16. Thus an increase of 24.4 per cent was witnessed during the period. It worked out to about 1.4 per cent incremental increase every year. According to the available data, Muslim middle class constituted 21.1 per cent in 1998-99 which rose to 41.6 per cent in 2015-16. It was an incremental increase of 1.28 per cent every year. Hindu upper castes accounted for 19.5 per cent in 1998-99 which rose to 44.5 per cent in 2015-16. This represented an incremental increase of 1.56 per cent every year. He said that Muslim OBCs constituted 18.6 per cent as middle class in 1998-99 and 44.5

per cent in 2015-16, registering an incremental increase of 1.62 per cent every year. Similarly, Muslim upper castes constituted 22.3 per cent in 1998-99 and this rose to 39.6 per cent in 2015-16, registering an incremental increase of 1.08 per cent every year, he noted.

Dr. Abdul Shaban observed that while Haryana, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh were worst performing states, Bihar and Assam were low in uplifting the community to the level of the middle class. Attributing the low percentage of middle class among Muslims, he said that it was due to the marginal number of salaried class. This could be well understood by the fact that their share in government job was around 4-5 per cent. By and large, Muslims were engaged in self-employment, micro, small and medium businesses and enterprises. He identified seven major occupations in which Muslims were engaged. Urbanisation played an important role in the formation of the Muslim middle class. Besides, the penetration of formal education contributed to rise in the percentage of the middle class. Muslims were moving to urban areas in search of better life and employment. Eighty per cent of them moved to cities in search of employment. He said that Muslims did not have a share in large enterprises, though they benefited from economic liberalisation with low-mobility middle class. Compared to the north, south Indian Muslims were well-off. He suggested some of the measures, including emphasis on education, financial support for business, women's empowerment and progressive leadership within the community could change the current scenario.

Former member of the national statistical commission, PC Mohanan, commented that the middle class was a brand but nobody knew what products did it have. He asked to look at the consumables the middle class consumed. The available figures could

be segregated to understand what the position exactly was. There was a correlation between education and the middle class. He concluded by saying that after Covid-19, phenomenal growth in the sale of smartphones had been witnessed, and there were certain dimensions to what one believed was the middle class. Distinguished fellow at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RISDC), Prof. Amitabh Kundu, held that it was the total value of assets that characterised the middle class. He said that the middle class should be measured through consumption. The middle class was a way of life and the idea of its measurement was shifting to assets. Thus the value of assets was important for measuring the middle class. The middle class might be higher for a community but it did not define the entire middle class community. Referring to the Muslim community, he noted that Muslims spent less on food items as compared to other items. On the basis of assets, one could articulate the middle class as a community. The middle class was basically a sociological and cultural group. Naming internationally acclaimed economists—Prof. Amartya Sen and Prof. Abhijeet Banerjee, he said that the arrogance of certain economists destroyed the concept. He hailed Shaban and Sattar's perspective on the growth of the middle class in India, and termed it as a departure from the usual narrative on the concept.

Dr. Mahabir Singh Jaglan, professor of Geography at Kurukshetra University, spoke on the geographical distribution of the middle class. He said that the share of the Muslim middle class in various economic activities was low. In Haryana, Mewat had the largest concentration of Muslims, followed by Yamunanagar with 12 percent concentration. He sought to know if higher concentration of Muslim population made the community more vulnerable to its ghettoisation.

In answers to a question, Shaban said that the bourgeois contributed to the growth of economic development. He observed that consumer expenditure did not take into account the deprivation of Muslims. People were not making assets but consuming them, particularly in urban areas. High consumer expenditure did not mean the community was well-off. Referring to the geography of riots, he said that they took place more in the north. Both indigenous and exogenous factors were responsible for Muslim concentration areas in Mumbai. If the members of one community mingled with the people of other communities, they would benefit. But this might not be possible in clusters, he added. Prof. Kundu opined that Muslims had less access to health services, good jobs, credit facilities and TV than the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

In his presidential remarks, the secretary general, IOS, Prof. Z.M. Khan, held that the gender development issue was also very important and must be taken care of. It must also be seen whether the Muslims were playing the same role as they were expected to play. He made special mention of the prevailing political environment in which the deprivation of Muslims was practiced and a propaganda against them unleashed.

The webinar ended with a vote of thanks extended by Dr. Amir Ullah Khan.

IOS online lecture on Human Development based on Wisdom and its Correlation with Modern Science

An online lecture on "Human Development on Wisdom and its correlation with Modern Science", was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on September 4, 2021. The lecture was delivered by Dr. Thuppil Venkatesh, CEO and director of Foundation for Quality India.

Popularly known as Lead Man of India, Dr. Thuppil Venkatesh is

professor emeritus at ST. John's Medical College, Bengaluru and advisor to the Association of Health Care Providers of India (AHP) and Consortium of Accredited Health Care Organizations (CAHO).

Delivering the lecture, Dr. Venkatesh said that human beings were constantly involved in building their society across the globe from the time immemorial. While society in true sense was the blend of information, knowledge and wisdom, which were transient part of the process to accomplish the three virtues, viz., the combination of information gathered on day-to-day basis with individual and cumulative experience, acquired knowledge, accumulated and applied for mutual benefit which gradually developed, and the timely application of evolved wisdom applied from time to time for the betterment of everyone. He held that human development had four stages. The four stages of human development based on science were, development of brain, mind, personality and self. The first stage, he said, was the physical development of human body. It started with a small fetus which was developed in the womb. It took months to fully develop. What was required for a healthy body was good nutrition and good water to the pregnant lady. Music too played a positive role in the development of the body. Referring to the survey done on 100 pregnant women he noted that it showed that music was found to be very soothing to them.

Dr. Thuppil Venkatesh observed that calm and quiet atmosphere too was a contributory factor to the development of a healthy body. In the process, skin of the new born was growing along with the growth of brain. From the time of inception, brain developed and any damage to it could not be regenerated. Underlining the importance of water, he said that it was the most essential component of human development. He said that it was the brain's development that

created good mind. If one had a developed mind, he could make anything. The complexity of the mind could not be determined by medicine. This was so because different people had different minds. According to him, human activity was the second stage of human development. He listed six activities in a human being that were unique. This could be better explained by the fact that a grandson might not have the same traits as his or her grandfather. This could apply to friends as well. Explaining personality development as the third stage of human development, he said that this had two components – the way one covered himself, like clothes and the way of talking. While the clothes reflected the impression and the opinion about one's clothes, the way of talking gave some idea about the personality about his ancestors. He opined that knowledge made one develop his personality. Wisdom led to humility which came from simplicity, mind and personality, he noted.

Commenting on the fourth stage of human development, Dr. Venkatesh, said that it was social development, which also included introspection. He observed that one should have intent instead of intention. In this respect, introspection was very important. Similarly, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development played a big role in the overall development of a human being. Information and knowledge were used for the development of mind. Man was made of emotions and that was the reason why it led to collapse in some cases. He said that spirituality was beyond religion, and to sustain oneself, some spirituality was a must. He enumerated the activities that nurtured human development. There were playing a fair game - only learning, earning and returning. He maintained that quality learning was important but it could not ensure 100 percent achievement. Earning was essential to sustain family but there should be no illegal earning. By return, he meant return of what one owed to others to

the right person before the final return. Answering the question as to how the entire concept of human development impacted societal development, he said that it contributed a lot to the way one could see the world as a beautiful place to live. He ended the discourse by urging not to argue but discuss. He was happy to note that large number of people attended the session.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

CHENNAI CHAPTER

IOS Chennai Chapter organises an International Webinar on the "Life and contributions of Hazrath Abdul Hameed Baqavi (Rah)"

Institute of Objective Studies, Chennai Chapter resumed its activities by conducting a trilingual International webinar on the "Life and Contributions of Hazrath Abdul Hameed Baqavi (Rah)" on Saturday, 23 October 2021 at 6.30 p.m. Organised in association with the Global Tamil Muslim Media (GTM), USA, and live-streamed on YouTube, the program was well-attended and attracted audience not only from India but from USA, UK, Middle East and Far East Countries.

The program commenced with the recitation of verses from the holy Qur'an by Br. Patel Abdur Raheem, member IOS, Chennai Chapter. Mohamed Haneef Katib, co-ordinator, Chennai Chapter welcomed the distinguished guests and speakers and the audience from all over the globe. He expressed his pleasure over the warm response of the audience and informed them that IOS Chennai Chapter will be conducting webinars on the life and contributions of eminent personalities from Tamilnadu and documenting them in future.

Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, in his opening remarks, congratulated the IOS Chennai Chapter on organising a multilingual, international webinar on the life and contributions of a great scholar of Tamilnadu.

He pointed out that Muslims have been raised as the best of communities (Khair Ummah), and the message of dignity of mankind has to be communicated to the entire humanity. In this global challenging environment, when the humanity is faced with discrimination, inhuman behaviour, racism and other challenges, we should, as a chosen ummah, stand up to uphold the Qur'anic values of brotherhood, justice and equality. He added that in this connection, the Institute of Objective Studies, a research-based organisation has published more than 500 books on contemporary issues faced by Muslims and humanity at large. He advised to study the changing situations in India and the world, and to adopt a research-based attitude to diagnose the challenges and find the solutions accordingly.

He paid his tributes to Abdul Hameed Baqavi and said that the moulana was not only an outstanding scholar, but also a freedom fighter, a reformer and a notable leader of his times. While congratulating the members of IOS Chennai Chapter, he advised to document his contributions and publicise them so that our younger generation is aware of our glorious past.

He also suggested that seminars be held on the Constitution of India and its protection by inviting prominent secular leaders and distinguished scholars in political science and law.

Brother Ibnu Soud Shahabdeen, President, All India Milli Council, Tamilnadu Chapter, in his presidential address, traced the history of development of Institute of Objective Studies as a think tank, and remembered the contributions of Moulana Qazi Mujahidul Islam Qasmi (Rah) in the formation of institutions like All India Milli Council and Islamic Fiqh Academy. IOS, he said, has conducted several seminars on national and international level. One such seminar was held at The New College, Chennai, in which members

of IIIT (Institute of International Islamic Thought), USA had participated. Its performance and achievements have gained national and international recognition. The IOS is in consultative status (Roster) of Economic and Social Council of United Nations, he informed the audience.

The holy Qur'an has to be translated in vernacular languages so that its message is understood, which is the real purpose of its revelation. In this context, Moulana Abdul Hameed Baqavi's contribution of translating the holy Qur'an in Tamil language, facing multifarious challenges from many quarters is truly commendable, he added.

Presidential address was followed by three speeches in Urdu, Tamil and English. Moulana Mufti RoohulHuq, Member, AIMPLB, speaking in Urdu, traced the biography of Moulana Abdul Hamid Baqavi from his birth to his early education at Madrasa BaqiatusSalihath, Vellore, to his accomplishment as a translator of the holy Qur'an in Tamil. He explained the careful manner the moulana had adopted in translating the holy Qur'an. He printed his translation on half a page, leaving half page empty. Later, he sent these copies to renowned madaras and Islamic scholars and requested them to write their remarks, corrections, and feedback. After receiving them, he would correct and update his translation. He received his notes corrected in this manner from more than a hundred Scholars. Also, he personally visited all of them and had direct discussion with them. On 19 February, 1929, the first volume of the holy Quran was published for the first time in the history of Tamilnadu.

HazrathMoulana Mohammad Khan Baqavi, a renowned scholar and translator in his speech in Tamil, noted that though Muslims lived in Tamilnadu for over 1300 years, no scholar had attempted to translate the holy Quran in Tamil language. This honour was bestowed by Allah on

Moulana Abdul Hameed Baqavi. In addition to the above distinction, Moulana joined the Khilafath Movement spearheaded by Ali Brothers, along with Mahatma Gandhi. He was involved actively in the Indian freedom struggle. He was a true reformer, and on one occasion, spoke for over two hours so eloquently in favour of liquor prohibition that the Late Rajaji who was presiding over the session concluded it, remarking that Moulana's speech was sufficient as he had covered all possible aspects of the subject. The learned speaker concluded his speech addressing the ulema of today to learn from the life of the legendary Moulana so that they are also remembered by the coming generations just like Moulana Abdul Hameed Baqavi.

Sister FathimaMuzaffar, a renowned social activist and member of the Womens' Wing of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, competently compeered the session, and thanked Allah SWT for being blessed to be born as the granddaughter of HazrathMoulana Abdul Hameed Baqavi. She interpreted the significant aspects of the life and contributions of her grandfather from the Urdu and Tamil speeches into the English language. Highlighting briefly the contributions of Moulana Abdul Hameed Baqavi, she said that he was a multilinguist and was proficient in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Tamil, Malayalam and French. He interpreted the speeches of MoulanaAbulKalam Azad in Tamil whenever the legendary leader visited Tamilnadu. He completed the holy task of translation of the holy Qur'an in 2 volumes over a period of 30 years. The task was accomplished despite the stiff resistance from many quarters and financial crunch. The then Nizam of Hyderabad sanctioned the income of one entire village in Tamilnadu as financial assistance to Moulana to continue his scholarly pursuit.

The program came to an end with a Vote of Thanks by Dr. Major

ZahidHussain, member, governing council of the IOS. While thanking all the participants individually and collectively, he promised the audience that the IOS Chennai Chapter will continue to conduct webinars on the legendary personalities of Tamilnadu in future.

MaulanaAlauddinNadvi, in his paper presentation on the symposium said, "Generally there are three factors which make a person a good human being; ancestral traditions, atmosphere and education and Maulana was lucky enough to have all these three." Dr Farman Nadvi said that MaulanaAzhari had three unique qualities; he was a sincere Da'ee of Islam, was an expert of Arabic language, and a great scholar of Islam.

MaulanaAzhari's son, DrMaulanaSaeedur Rahman FaiziNadwi said, "My father lived his life as a good human being. He always cared for his neighbours and relatives. He was a true well-wisher of humanity and an ambassador of peace. Mufti SarwarFarooqui mentioned some of the Dawah activities of the Maulana and said that he was a "great Da'ee of Islam".

During the symposium, a video of Maulana Syed Mohammed RabeyNadvi was shared in which Maulana praised the services and contributions of MaulanaAzhari. Mentioning his teaching skills he said, "When MaulanaAzhari returned from Cairo and joined DarulUloomNadwatulUlama, Lucknow as a teacher of Arabic he had invented some unique and modern methods to teach language, which proved to be very effective and unique at that time."

The symposium started with the introductory speech of Dr Sabah Ismail

Nadvi, member-Madrasah Service Commission, Government of West Bengal. AfnaanAkhzar presented the vote of thanks. IOS Kolkata Chapter will soon be organising its next symposium of the series on Pir Abu Bakr Siddiqui (r.a.) of Furfura who was one of the most learned, revered and influential Sufis of the nineteenth century Bengal.

A Tribute to Prof.ShamimHanfi

Prof.ShamimHanfi, my senior colleague in the Dept of Urdu, JamiaMilliaIslamia passed away on May 6, 2021 after battling a protracted illness. He was a prolific writer, famous critic, orator, and a good teacher. With his wit and remarkable sharp memory, he endeared both of his readers and listeners, nevertheless avoided to involve himself in the literary controversies of the day so as not to be irrelevant in the course of the heated debate and discourse on post-modern western theories and their application on the creative writings. He had a good taste and understanding of the philosophical dimensions of the modern Urdu literature and was a credible literary and cultural link between India and Pakistan. With his visible presence on Delhi's many important Urdu platforms such as Rekhta, Ghalib institute, Ghalib academy, AnjumanTarraqi-e-Urdu, NCPUL and NCERT, etc, he served the cause of Urdu with passion, courage, and distinction. He was also the recipient of this year's coveted International Qatar Award chaired by

the eminent Urdu critic Professor GopiChand Narang. He was a familiar face on print and electronic media throughout his life. Not to have evolved any style of his own, he truly followed his Aligarian mentors and always lived under the shadow of Rasheed Ahmad Siddiqui, Ale Ahmad Suroor and Khurshidul Islam, etc, so far as his infatuation, deep interest and orientation to classical critical traditions are concerned. Though he could not convincingly clarify his literary stand or theory probably owing to his essentially narcissistic nature, he usually talked and focussed on the literary cannons in terms of its ethics and social consciousness in most of his writings which put him closer to the Progressives of the bygone era. He will go down in the annals of Urdu literature as an exceptional visionary who was quite often found basking in India's past glory manifested through its syncretic cultural ethos and pluralistic legacies unfortunately vanishing in our times. He wanted this multiculturalism to be fostered, strengthened, and protected instead of being desecrated and destroyed owing to greed and ignorance.

Professor ShamimHanfi will be remembered for his graceful personality, sparkling prose and overall, the range of his insightful attainments and enviable corpus of his lifelong intellectual accomplishments.

— QaziObaidur Rahman Hashmi

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