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Thought for the Month

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

Al-Quran- 49:13

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FOCUS

Reflecting on the impact of Seattle and its aftermath almost two years later, it is difficult to make a conclusive assessment. Some commentators have argued that these events marked the crucial moment when antiglobalist forces finally emerged from the ideological sidelines and imprinted their claims and demands on the mainstream consciousness. According to this rather optimistic interpretation, Seattle represents a milestone in the history of antiglobalist transnational social movements and their evolution toward a more egalitarian global civil society. As Luis Hernandez Navarro, editor of the radical Mexican daily *La Jornada*, put it: “[T]he ideology of neoliberal globalization has produced a new transnational political actor: The globalized. The Revolt of Seattle is an announcement that his—and her—hour has arrived.” More cautious observers do not necessarily view the “Battle of Seattle” as the first stage in a global popular revolution. Voicing their scepticism about the lasting significance of Seattle and similar protests, they question the ability of antiglobalist movements to develop into a well-organised global civil society capable of challenging the hegemonic neoliberal paradigm. Other commentators point to considerable philosophical differences and tactical cleavages separating various antiglobalist groups, particularly with regard to the ultimate political goal of the movement. Is it to reform the existing system and its global institution, or is it to smash them altogether? Is it to strengthen nation-states or transcend them? Is it to advocate localization and disengagement from the global economy, or is it to support a limited form of global capitalism? I believe that we will begin to receive some answers to these questions during the next few years. Particular agendas will be strengthened as more linkages are forged by a growing number of organizations across different political and cultural zones. We are already witnessing the emergence of huge transnational networks such as the North American-based network “50 Years Is Enough” and the European-based alliance, the “Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens.” As the contacts among antiglobalist groups intensify they will learn from one another, perhaps developing a comprehensive global direct-action network that further challenges the legitimacy and authority of the globalist worldview. Organizations such as the World Social Forum (WSF)—founded as the counterpart to the WEF—have already emerged as a viable foundation from which to develop such antiglobalist policy proposals as the cancellation of Third World debt and the taxation of international capital flows. The 2001 WSF summit in Porto Alegre, Brazil, was attended by about 10,000 activists and politicians who pledged to design a common platform of principles and a coherent plan of action. Most importantly, the conference participants emphasized the overriding importance of poking holes in the dominant neoliberal discourse on globalization. As long as most people accept the five central globalist claims as an accurate picture of social reality, the antiglobalist movement will remain a weak competitor relegated to the sidelines. As Bernard Cassen, a French WSF organizer and editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, put it: “We are here to show the world that a different world is possible.”

From Globalization The New Market Ideology by Manfred B. Stegar, pp. 133-134.

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

Sixth Qazi Mujahidul Islam Memorial Lecture on “Communal Interpretation of Indian History: A Review”

Communal interpretation works both ways. It is both a product and the generator of communalism. Unity of thought among Hindu and Muslim communal historians along with the British imperialist school did not end up with the creation of Pakistan, they still practise communal historiography.

These observations were made by Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan, former Professor and Head of the Department of History and Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and currently the Vice-Chairman of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) while delivering the Sixth Qazi Mujahidul Islam Memorial Lecture on “Communal Interpretation of Indian History: A Review”, organised by the IOS at the Conference Hall here on May 24, 2014.

He sought to explain that communal historians used history in several ways with one central theme that the Hindus and Muslims could not and did not live together in peace under one judicial, political and social system. Choice of words was different but both the Hindu and Muslim communalists spoke the same language also and some Europeans, whom many of us called imperialist school, were not different, he said. He pointed out that communal historians had a hostile attitude towards Indian National Congress. Some Muslim leaders thought that the Congress was bent upon setting up caste Hindu Raj in India and wanted even during the British rule, to dominate Muslims. The Hindu communal leaders also projected an anti-Hindu image of the Congress.

Prof. Khan argued that the history of a divided people was a product of divide and rule policy of the British Government, which still continued among historians as a hangover. He divided the historians of the Indian sub-continent into four groups: 1. western/imperialist, 2. Muslim communal historians, 3. Hindu communal historians; and 4. nationalist historians. He held that there was now a fifth group of new historians who did not regard a religious community as a monolithic unit without internal tensions. Their community consideration was based on occupations/profession and not on religion. He said that the impact of communal historiography was so complete that the nationalist leaders, including mass leader like Gandhiji, recognised the presence of separate



Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan delivers his speech

communities also in historical times and stressed the need for unity among them as they had done in medieval times. Nationalist historians projected Akbar’s “Sulh-e-kul” while the communalist Hindus and Muslims chose Aurangzeb to project their point of view. He maintained that the Britishers through their historians, like Elliot, wanted the Hindus to feel that the white men had liberated them from the “cruel, burdensome and agonising slavery”, which was inflicted upon them by the barbarian and savage the Muslims. The nationalist and the Marxist scholars had extensively quoted from Elliot’s Preface to establish that communal historiography was planned by the British, fertilised by the communalist

writers and harvested by the economic interests at the cost of the poor people of both the communities.

Referring to several myths in Indian history propounded and cherished by the communal historians, he said that the Hindu communal and the nationalist historians drew great inspiration equally from the greatness of India’s ancient past with one difference, the communalists were inspired by the ancient period and the Hindu kings and chieftains of medieval period like Rana Pratap and Shivaji whereas the nationalists were as much proud of Akbar as they were of Ashoka. Commenting on some characteristic features of the Hindu communal historiography, he said that they claimed the ancient period of Indian history was most glorious. Even the negative elements were either praised or ignored. Like an arithmetical formula, they had made Indian culture equal to ancient culture and the latter to the Gupta culture which was the “golden age” of Indian history. The medieval period was said to be full of political and religious persecutions whereas there was total tolerance and peace in ancient times.

Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan said that GD Birla, founder of the great Birla industrial and commercial empire, through his rich ‘charitable’ Krishanpan Trust with the blessings of the then central minister, KM Munshi and the intellectual participation of the deadly communal historian, RC Mazumdar, assisted the publication of several volumes, called “History and Culture of Indian People” which was popularly known as Vidya Bhavan series. It was a typical model of communal historiography. He opined that pre-independence communal historiography was half-baked history, but the post-independence historiography, including the secular one, was fully mature and evenly baked.

Examples of persecution and intolerance were exceptions rather than a rule in a largely rural society and toleration was universal except in circumstances when the source of livelihood of a group, caste or class suffered. Tolerance in ancient and intolerance in medieval India is communal historiography. We had been the victims of this kind of historiography. Tolerance was the spirit of Ashoka's state policy which he followed almost till the end of his life. However, towards the end of his reign, he pursued a pro-Buddhist policy to the extent that Ajivikas and Jains who hitherto enjoyed patronage and freedom were harassed. Finally, Ashoka started suppressing dissenting Buddhist monks and nuns by withdrawing state support and expelling them from Sangha. Narendra Gupta, one of the last king of Gupta dynasty raided Magadh and cut down the much respected Bodhi tree at Gaya and wrecked Buddhist foundations wherever he could.

Referring to the communal bias of the eminent historian Jadunath Sarkar against Aurangzeb, Prof. Khan

said that he wrote about his demolition of temples in the text of the book while his reference to Kailash temple at Ellora found a place only in a footnote. When Hindu and Muslim rulers needed money they plundered the temples because they had immense wealth. Mosques, on the other hand, had nothing except the brick or stone walls and thus a mosque never attracted the attention of invaders except when it housed the enemies. He remarked that "intolerance, oppression, devastation are cruelty" of Muslim monarchs, especially their "intolerance and violence" towards "their Hindu subjects" were so extremely and passionately propagated that the RSS chief, Madhavrao Sedashiv Golwalkar had no hesitation in calling the whole Muslim community, including the artisans, workers and peasants as

"murdering hordes," "murderous bands", "despoilers" "free booters", "the enemy", "the force of destruction" "old invaders and foes", "our old and bitter enemies".

He lamented that prestigious publishing houses were also bringing out communal histories, not because they had joined any active anti-Muslim gang, but to make money. Unfortunately, there is a large market for anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic literature. One such book is Laine's *Shivaji: Hindu King in Islamic India* published by the Oxford University Press. The very title of the book smells foul. The author of the book chose Hindu Marathi authors to project his mission to demonstrate Hindu prejudices and hatred against Muslims and Islam.



A view of the audience

Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan laid stress on a positive interpretation of history to project positive role of Indian Muslims in the country's history. The fact of history was India's deep-rooted belief in unity in diversity, the backbone of Indian civilisation. This was on account of the strength of all communities, including Hindus and Muslims. Hindus and Muslims had been living together in spite of conflicts for several centuries, he said. He liked the noted writer Nirad C. Chaudhari's comment in his book, *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, that it was from the end of 1906 that we became conscious of a new kind of hatred for Muslims to Rabindra Nath Tagore's observation in his Bengali novel *Ghare Baire* (Home and

Outside). He noted that the distortion of history by communal historians of any kind, including the scholars of the West, was a challenge to objective and positive understanding of history. He concluded by saying that communal history generated communalism and communalism encouraged communal history. Both provided sustenance to each other.

Earlier, the function began with the recitation of a Quranic verse by Maulana Abdullah Tarique. Prof. Ishtiyaque Danish, Professor and Head of the Department of Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard and Finance Secretary, IOS, in his welcome address referred to the contribution of Qazi Mujahidul Islam to the Islamic jurisprudence. His decrees on the issues referred to the Darul Qaza were always hailed as they reflected his erudition and clarity of opinion. His association with the IOS was marked by his keen interest in its activities.

Assistant Secretary General of IOS and Professor of Law, Guru Gobind Singh Indrasprastha University, New Delhi, Prof. Afzal Wani, in his address remarked that the IOS gave

academics and students a space to interact and arrive at positive conclusions. In his presidential remarks, the Secretary General of the IOS, Prof. Z M Khan, said that the Indian society was very accommodative to whoever came to the country. Its resilience could be gauged from the fact that even those who did not make any significant contribution to society were welcome. Citing an example how a divide between the West and India existed in various symbols, he said that while the West regarded nature as enemy, India treated it as mother. Advising Muslims not to get frightened by what had happened in the country, he asked them to individually and collectively occupy the space provided by the sufis and saints, and the Indian Constitution.

He quoted a Western scholar who believed that Muslims had not made any significant contribution to any field in the past 200 years. The scholar was of the view that Muslims had stopped thinking and giving new thoughts. He said that history was part of Islam as was geography, shipping, agriculture, etc. He called for use of planning and new techniques to keep abreast of times, or else results would be disastrous. Taking a leaf from history, he said that the role of the ulema of Deoband in the freedom struggle was second to none. He informed that a series of lectures akin to this would be organised by the IOS in future.

While Dr. Nakhat Hussain Nadwi conducted the proceedings, Dr. Tabish Mehdi proposed a vote of thanks. A good number of teachers, including Prof. Haseena Hashia, Dr. Eqbal Husain, and Khurshid Alam from Jamia Millia Islamia, Muzaffar Husain Ghazali, General Secretary, Pasmada Samaj Sanghatan, Safdar Ali and Syed P Haider from Islamic Fiqh Academy, Safi Akhtar and Waseem Ahmad Fahmi from All India Milli Council, social activists and prominent citizens were present on the occasion.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

CALICUT CHAPTER

Report for the Year 2013-14

During the year, 2013-14 the Chapter has been able to organize some important programmes in addition to the regular activities.

The Chapter is run by a Committee made up of the following:

1. Prof P. Koya (coordinator)
2. E Abubacker
- A. A. Vahab(secretary)
3. P.T. Kunhali
4. Dr K.M. Muhammad
5. T.V.Hameed
6. T.C.Mahboob

Joint Venture

This year the Committee met four times to discuss the activities of the Chapter. One important item of agenda was the utilization of IOS land in Calicut. We are glad to report that we

have been able to finalize the terms and conditions of a joint venture to build a multi storied building in which the Institute will get half of total built up area. It is expected to give a good monthly income to the Institute in addition to sufficient office space.

Workshop on Social Science Research

The Chapter conducted a two day Workshop on Social Science Research in association with Chair for Islamic Studies and Research, University of Calicut on 8th & 9th November 2013 at Seminar Hall of the Chair. The Programme was inaugurated by Dr. M Abdu Salam Vice Chancellor of the University. Dr. AI Rahmathullah (Visiting Prof, Islamic Chair) presided over the meeting. Dr. V.A Ashokan (Head of Economics Dept, Nehru College, Khanjagad), Dr M.Usman (Principal, Amal College), Dr. Mahmood Shihab (Principal, Farooq B.ED College, Kottakal), Dr. M M Khan (Associate Prof and Head of History Dept, Govt Women's College, Thiruvananthapuram), Dr M U A Musthafa (Director, School of Distance Education, University of Calicut), Prof P Koya (Coordinator, IOS Calicut Chapter), Dr A I Rahmathullah spoke on different topics on social science research.

More than 70 research scholars and post graduate students attended the workshop. They were also given assignments to study and write term papers on select topics relevant to research.

Discussion

The Chapter conducted a one day discussion on spending in the way of Allah in association with Kerala Chapter of All India IDB Graduate Association on 25-12-2013 at Islamic Youth Centre Auditorium Calicut. Br. Jabir VP, Executive Secretary welcomed the audience. AIGA National president Engr. Muhammed Musthafa presided over the meeting. Dr. A.I Rahmathullah, Visiting Prof. Islamic Chair, University of Calicut and Br. A Abdul Vahab, Secretary, IOS Calicut Chapter presented the papers for discussion.

Br. Aboobacker Mescio, Br. P.K.Soofi, Dr. A A Haleem, Br. Karmana Ashraf Moulavi and Br. PT Kunhali participated in the discussion.

Two day seminar on India 100 years

This was a part of a series of seminars and discussions intended to explore the future of country within the next 35years. The theme of the workshop was *India 100 Years (1947-2047) Muslim Agenda, Past, Present and Future*. The workshop was organized in association with Centre for Human Resource Development, Manjeri (CHRD) on 8th & 9th March 2014 at MSS Auditorium Calicut, Kerala. Br. A A Vahab, Secretary IOS, Calicut Chapter welcomed the audience. Prof. Z M Khan, Secretary General of IOS, New Delhi Inaugurated the seminar. CHRD Director Abdurahman Darimi presided over the meeting. Jamal Kochangadi, P.T. Kunhali, Dr. A.Jadeeda, Abdul Majeed Nadvi, Dr. A Nizarudheen, Dr. A.I.Rahmathullah, Sadarudheen Vazhakkad, Munawir Kodyathur, Dr. Z.A. Ashraf, V.M.Fahad, P.K.Hameed Kutty, C.Davood, Prof. A.P.Abdul Vahab, A.P.Kunhamu, A. Saeed, Ashraf Kalpatta, O.Abdullah, Civic Chandran, N.P.Chekkutty, Karamana Ashraf Moulavi, A Vasu, presented different topics in the seminar. Around two hundred resource persons, academics and social activists attended the seminar

Woman Centre

As a part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Institute it was decided to start a **Centre of Women and Family Studies** in Calicut to study the problems and prospects of tremendous upsurge in women empowerment. It is decided to open the centre by the end of this year.

Volume on women studies

One editorial board meeting was held to discuss the publication of the papers and proceedings of three day International seminar on Women's Empowerment held in January 2012 as part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations. The following members were present.

1. Dr. Raziya Parveen
2. Dr. Lubna Mehnaz

3. A.S.Zainaba
4. Prof. P.Koya
5. A. Abdul Vahab

It was decided to bring out the volume by the end of May 2014 and to invite other scholars to contribute to the volume.

Survey

The Chapter collected information about 1600 social scientists from seven districts of Kerala. One competent surveyor is retained for this purpose. We hope to complete this work during 2014-15. It will be a valuable addition to the IOS Data Bank at the Head Quarters.

Data Bank

The work to digitalize clippings is complete. About 22000 clippings have been digitalized. However the work to develop a search engine still continues.

Archives

The project launched in 2007 aims at collecting and preserving rare manuscripts and records related to Kerala Muslim culture and history.

Library

Chapter's library is open to all academics, students and common people. A number of people regularly use the library for research and reference. All current newspapers and magazines are available.

Staff

Mr Jabir VP is the full time Exe Secretary.

Visits

Prof.P.Koya, the Coordinator, visited the head quarters three times during the year and discussed various issues with the Chairman and other Head Quarters officials.

Br A. A Vahab also represented the Chapter in different meetings held at the headquarters.

CHENNAI CHAPTER

Annual Report (2013-2014)

During the month of October 2013, Dr. Mohammed Manzoor Alam

officially appointed me as the coordinator of IOS Chennai chapter. Soon after taking the charge, I had a meeting with Brother Ibnu Saud and brother Abdur Raheem Patel (Finance secretary IOS Chennai chapter)

Alhamdulillah, on 18.12.2013 (Wednesday) Sham-e-Muzakara was organized by the IOS Chennai chapter.

Br.AJM Zaneer, from Sri Lanka interacted with the students (inmates of New College Hostel). He discussed the issues pertaining to the students inside the educational campuses across the globe specially in the Muslim countries citing examples from the Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. He stressed that inmates of the hostel specially the Muslim students can play an important role in Dawah activities. He also said that Muslim students should also invite non-muslim students to join them in elimination of ragging in hostels, thereby bringing a discipline among the inmates.

Capt. Ameer Ali,(President, All India Milli Council Tamilnadu Branch)-- former NCC officer and Tamil Professor of New College addressed the students by highlighting the role to be played by inmates of hostel specially during the admission in the hostels.

Br. Ibnu Saud also stressed upon the need to form various committees to bring discipline among the inmates. He also said that he was a former inmate of New College Hostel wherein he did Dawah inside the campus with the help of other inmates.

Dr. Major.Zahid Husain, Co-ordinator, IOS Chennai Chapter welcomed the gathering.

Br. Abdur Raheem Patel, Br. Sheik Ismail (treasurer, All India Milli Council, TamilNadu Branch) also attended, Faculty members, students and administrative staff of New College also attended

The program ended with a Dua followed by dinner to the dignitaries.

Sham-e-Muzakara held on 25.1.2014

The IOS Chennai Chapter organized Sham-e-Muzakara on

Saturday the 25th Jan.2014 at the New College, Chennai-600014.

The meeting commenced with the recitation of few verses from Holy Quraan by Prof. Bakthiary Nadvi, Asst. Prof. of Arabic, New College. Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter welcomed the gathering and Dr. Z. Abdul Latheef, Prof. of Arabic and Vice Principal of New College introduced the Chief Guest Prof. S.M. Tariq, Dept. of Arabic, Dr. Zakir Hussain College, New Delhi.

Prof. S.M. Tariq was kind enough to accept our invitation on behalf of IOS Chennai Chapter to address the gathering. During the course of his talk he was mentioning that the present day youth are keen in knowing more about worldly matters and neglect the main issues pertaining to Education. He emphasized on the Right to Education and also quoted from the Holy Quraan, the word IQRA (to read) and highlighted that educating a male and female is compulsory in Islam. Further he quoted from Quran Yatadabbaroon and Yatafakkaroon which means one should always plan ahead and think over before executing a plan.

He also highlighted that the Indian Education System has shown improvements in the recent decade. But there are still so many curses in our education system that we have to implement such Right to Education Act.

He highlighted some facts which cannot be neglected in terms of implementing Right to Education Act in India

He further elaborated that UNICEF is playing a vital role with the Govt. to provide a basic education to Indian children. Technical support on education quality, school retention and achievement rate is also provided by UNICEF to make the RTE Act a success.

Prof. Tariq also highlighted the key issues for achieving RTE

a) RTE provides a platform to reach the unreached, with specific provision for disadvantaged group, such as child labour, migrant children and children with special needs

b) RTE focuses on the quality teaching and learning.

He concluded his talk by saying that UNICEF should mobilize partners to raise the public awareness and provide a call to action. UNICEF should also play an instrumental role in bringing together relevant stake holders from Govt. civil society, teacher's organization, media and the celebrity world.

The meeting ended with a Dua by Moulavi Hafiz Anzar Sahib.

Sham-e-Muzakara held on 27.2.2014

The IOS Chennai Chapter organized Sham-e-Muzakara on Saturday the 27th Feb 2014 at the New College, Chennai-600014.

The meeting commenced with the recitation of few verses from Holy Quraan by Moulavi Hafiz Anzar Sahib, Nayeb Imam, New College masjid. Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter welcomed the gathering. Prof. Bakhtiyary Nadvi, Dept. of Arabic, New College introduced the chief guest Hafiz Moulavi Shamsuddeen Qasmi, Khateeb and Imam, Makkah masjid, Chennai.

Moulavi Qasmi sahib in his address highlighted the importance of Brotherhood in Islam. Since the gathering was more from student community, he stressed upon the necessity to understand the other Non – Muslim brothers and give them the message of oneness of God.

It was heartening to note that many Non – Muslim brothers who attended this meeting had an interaction with the chief guest (Question and answer session) for about half an hour and were very much satisfied by the answers given by the chief guest.

The meeting was attended by Dr. S. Abdul Maliq, Principal, The New College, members of the teaching faculty, administrative staff of New

College and the boarders of the New College hostel.

The meeting ended with a Dua by Hafiz Sikandar sahib, chief Imam of New College masjid followed by dinner to the dignitaries.

Sham-e-Muzakara held on 24.3.2014

The IOS Chennai Chapter organized Sham-e-Muzakara on Saturday the 24th Mar 2014 at the New College, Chennai-600014.

The meeting commenced with the recitation of few verses from Holy Quraan by Prof. Bakhtiyary Nadvi, Asst. Prof. of Arabic, New College. Dr. Major Zahid Husain, coordinator, IOS Chennai chapter welcomed the gathering.

Moulavi Abdul Basith Bukhari, a young MBA graduate from B.S. Abdur Rahman University, Chennai was kind enough to accept our invitation and agreed to have a discussion with the young students of New College.

The chief guest highlighted the importance of **SALAH** and stressed that for young students, while pursuing education, they should also bear in mind that **SALAH** is the most important duty to be performed by all. He went one step ahead by saying that if anyone deliberately avoids the prayers, which are enjoined upon all of us, quoting the aayahs from Holy Quraan, will certainly be answerable on the day of judgement.

The meeting attended by Dr. S. Abdul Maliq, Principal, The New College, Dr. Z. Abdul Latheef, Vice principal, The New College, members of the teaching faculty, administrative staff of New College and the boarders of the New College hostel.

The meeting was followed by question and answer sessions mostly from the Non – Muslim brothers.

The meeting was ended with a Dua by Hafiz Anzar sahib, Nayeb Imam of New College masjid followed by dinner to the dignitaries.

Book Review

The Emergence of Islam: Classical Traditions in Contemporary Perspective by *Gabriel Said Reynolds*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012, 226 pages.

Gabriel Said Reynolds 'The Emergence of Islam, with a new interpretation and new (although somewhat critical and controversial) insights, is an illustrated, lucidly, and comprehensively contribution to the study and history of the "emergence" of Islam. Usually such an account is rather "straightforward," whereas the question of "how much of this story is historically accurate" is "less straightforward" (p. ix). The book's three parts – "The Prophet Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs" (chapters 1 through 3), "The Qur'an" (chapter 4 through 7), and "Contemporary Perspectives" (chapter 8) – discuss the emergence of Islamic history from its origins to the contemporary views.

Part I presents the "traditional story" from the Prophet's birth to Ali's death (570-661): "Muhammad in Mecca," "Muhammad in Medina," and "The Birth of an Empire." In this part, Reynolds analyzes how and why pious Muslim scholars wrote Islam's "story" in this manner and simultaneously offers, in the same section or part, an appreciation of the Islamic understanding of the Prophet and his immediate four political successors.

Part 2 provides a "critical" scholarly perspective of Islam's rise through presenting the Qur'an, which, according to the author, is the "most ancient," earliest and primordial (p. x), and "most intriguing" source of its emergence (p. 167). Chapter 4, "The Qur'an and Its Message," comprises a general presentation of the Qur'an's message and the strategies it uses to convince the reader of its truth. Chapter 5, "The Quran and the Bible," deals with the Qur'an's close relationship with Biblical traditions. These are followed by chapter 6, "Rethinking the Biography of Prophet Muhammad," and chapter 7, "The

Historical Context of the Qur'an," wherein Reynolds asks what the Qur'an itself might teach us about the "story" of Islam's origins.

In this part, Reynolds uses the "Qur'anist" approach, although not in the "religious sense of the term" but "by relying on the Qur'an alone," in order to "gain a revealing view of Islam's emergence" (p. 92): "Whereas most scholars see the *Qur'an through the lens of the traditional history of Islam's emergence*, we will see the *history of Islam's emergence through the lens of the Qur'an*." (p. xi; italics added). In other words, he bases his narrative only on what is found in the Qur'an: "What we can know about the emergence of Islam from the witness of the Qur'an alone" (p. 90). Chapters 5 and 6 especially suggest that the "Qur'an was proclaimed in a milieu where people were hotly debating theology... and where they knew the literature of the Jews and Christians well" (p. 135). Similarly, in chapter 7 Reynolds states "Instead of asking what the biography of the Prophet can teach us about the Qur'an, we will ask what the Qur'an can tell us about the biography of the Prophet, and about the emergence of Islam in general" (p. 154).

Part 3 offers insight into contemporary Islamic visions of the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's life, illustrating thereby how Islam's interaction and contact with the West has led Muslims to develop new ideas about the Qur'an and the Prophet today. This chapter introduces case studies (viz., Egypt, Pakistan, and Iran) as bearing witness to the "power of the story of Islam's emergence to shape the world we live in today" (p. 196). It also discusses "Islam and Modernity" and "The Qur'an and Scientific Miracles," thereby making reference to Maurice Bucaille's *The Bible, the Qur'an, and Science* and "Muhammad and Morality" – with special reference to Muhammad Husayn Haykal's *Hayat-u-Muhammad/The Life of Muhammad*. The Most important arguments put forth are that (1) the "idea of scientific miracles in the Qur'an is due to modernity and "a response to the modern world" in

general, as well as to the "increasing awareness among Muslims of Western critiques of the Qur'an" in particular (p. 200); and (2) the "Prophet of Islam demonstrated moral, spiritual, and psychological qualities that offer humanity the secret of happiness today" (p. 203). In this chapter's conclusion, Reynolds answers the question, quoted at the beginning of this review, regarding the "story" of Islam, as historically, "less straightforward" (p. ix) in these words: "In the course of this book, it has become apparent that the question of Islam's emergence is *far from settled*" (p. 205; italics added). Suggesting that both "traditional Muslim scholars and earlier generations of Western scholars have largely failed to understand the Qur'an's intimate relationship with its religious context" (p. 208), Reynolds wrote this book not to reconcile "critical scholarship and religious thought," but to offer insights into two questions: (1) What can we actually know of Islam's emergence in history? And (2) How do faithful Muslims understand Islam's emergence? (p. 208). He has largely realized his goal, especially with regard to the first question. One shortcoming/weakness needs to be pointed out, however: He repeatedly uses story when referring to Islamic history, instead of history, narration, and similar terms for its emergence, and traditional and for the majority of references to the "biography of Prophet." The book also contains many helpful features: a timeline illustrating the traditional chronology of Islam's development from 570-661, a simplified genealogical chart of the Prophet's family tree, photographs of Islamic manuscripts and monuments, reproductions of classical Islamic art objects etc.

Reviewed by Tauseef Ahmad Parray

Selling Dreams by *Ishtiyaque Danish*

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

Mr. Narendra Modi, NDA's Prime Ministerial candidate, has succeeded in selling dreams. For several months both electronic and print media were forecasting a big victory for NDA and BJP. Exit polls, too, were unanimous that Congress will taste the worst electoral defeat of its history. As usual, there were critics who doubted, even condemned media for biased and motivated reporting in favour of NDA and BJP. Barring one opinion poll, all others failed to make the right prediction. It is history now that BJP alone has secured 282 seats and can form government on its own, though the party has been saying that NDA would form the government.

In retrospect we can say that Congress has paid dearly for its over confidence or because it failed to convince people that the performance of its government was not bad. No doubt a section of media was biased against it. But it should also be accepted that Congress was not speaking to the media as much as it should have. Most often Congress leaders were responding to charges of corruption and inflation and rarely they themselves held press conferences to tell the media as well as the people about their achievements. Congress's obsession with Nehru family has also been responsible for its decline. There are capable leaders in the party who are better communicators and could have performed very well, had they been entrusted with such

responsibilities. It should also be taken into account that Congress started its campaign quite late; they should have organised conferences and public meetings as soon as Narendra Modi started addressing public rallies, because their absence gave BJP a chance to occupy full media space. By the time Rahul Gandhi decided to speak to the media, Modi had conquered it.

It was a bitterly fought general election. Modi and BJP read people's mind well and also analysed the weaknesses of the rival parties. They rightly understood that the common people were hit hard by corruption and the rising prices of essential commodities. They also realized that the educated youth wanted a change that will brighten their future. Most importantly they studied and discovered that sections/castes within SCs and OBCs are not happy with traditional SC & OBC champions like Mayawati and Mulayam and very cleverly approached them. It is the shifting of substantial SC and OBC vote to BJP which explains its outstanding performance in UP and Bihar.

It must also be accepted that Mr. Modi proved himself a better communicator and captured the imagination of the people. He was greatly helped by the media which covered his rallies in a partisan manner. In fact, one might say that media played the most important role in creating

Modi's larger than life image. Thanks to the media people came to believe that here was a leader who can arrest the ever-rising inflation, end corruption, fight terrorism and give a fitting reply to erring and incorrigible Pakistan etc. etc.

The media, owned by the capitalists, never questioned Modi seriously. In fact, the capitalists were happy with his policy towards the big business houses. On the contrary they were apprehensive about Rahul Gandhi's socialist leanings; they were especially unhappy with his land acquisition policy. Understandably the capitalists and the media they owned decided to support Modi and helped him in selling dreams to the masses which are difficult to fulfil.

Both Congress and BJP believe in market economy. But the media never told the public how Modi, a champion of market economy will control inflation caused by the market economy. Even Congress never questioned how Modi's market economy will perform better than Manmohan's market economy?

Very soon people will realize that as far as economic policies are concerned Modi is a follower of Manmohan and he too will fail in controlling the rising prices.

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