

Contemplating Preaching

Mushtaq Hurra

From sectarian abhorrence to our falling ethical standards, we are passing through an ugly turmoil of social, religious and moral disintegration. We are confronted with numerous drastic issues which if not resolved at the earliest, will bear terrible consequences in near future. Number of drug abusers and addicts in our valley is assuming dangerous proportions with every passing day, sale of liquor is substantially increasing in our markets, vulgarity is consuming the legacy of our cherished values and morals, corruption of different kinds is barely considered illegitimate, wasting productive time on social networking sites and internet browsing has become the norm of our young people, books including the holy Quran are lying dust-ridden in our shelves and racks, smartphone screens displaying profanities continue to be the chief source of our amusement, yet our clerics and orators squabble on holy pulpits to desecrate them badly. Either they are complacent or indiscernible about the growing iniquitous practices prevalent in our society. These ostensible contractors of Islam have stooped so low that our ancestors might be abashed in their graves because their successors have begun to sell their prized ideals on cheaper prices. Social reformation should have been one of the core priorities of our clerics, but they continue to hoodwink masses to grind their selfish axes.

The holy rostrums should have been used to eradicate social evils like dowry, indecency, defrauding, fornication, late marriages, corruption and the growing disobedience of Allah SWT and his descended heavenly laws but our Molvis have other ideas. These seats should have been the sources of our emancipation and liberation but oblivious preachers have yoked our necks in new slaveries.

Alas! The nominal rectors and preachers only incite factional hatred among ummah. They perpetually spit venom through their sermons and speeches from holy minbars. They take pride in issuing decrees against their ideological rivals. They hardly miss any opportunity to lower the guard of this beleaguered community. They should have balm the bruises of ummah but they are hellbent on spreading abomination and a sense of ill-will against their own brethren. I pity their blind followers and fans who endorse their nefarious designs either consciously or unconsciously. Indulging in disgustingly awful debates has become the chief motive of these so-called ambassadors of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and His companions/sahabah never tried to discredit their own people though they might have had some differences with them.

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What is the Future of Gig Economy in India?



Nripendra Abhishek Nrip

There is an opportunity for women in this. The requirement of working fixed hours per day deters women from taking up formal sector jobs. The gig economy provides women with workplace jobs that offer flexibility in terms of working hours

The Internet is a very powerful business platform. Many people are able to generate good income through networks, in today's digital world the definition of employment and nature of work is also changing rapidly. A new global economy is fast emerging, which is being named as the 'Gig Economy'. The Gig Economy is a free market system in which temporary work opportunities generally exist and various organizations hire freelance workers for short-term engagements, with Let's contract.

By 2024, the gig sector is expected to account for about 4 per cent of India's total workforce, according to a report released this month by financial services platform StrideOne. It is expected to provide employment to around 23.5 million workers by 2024 – a three-fold increase from just 8 million – or 1.5 per cent of the workforce – in 2020-21.

This type of work has grown in popularity in recent years because it is more productive for personnel. It provides flexibility and freedom and can be a cost-effective solution for businesses. Gig workers are the ubiquitous new workforce. They are the people who get us the food we ordered online, take us from home to the office or wherever are, and usually provide many services that go unnoticed.

There are two fundamental factors behind the growth of the gig economy in India. Firstly, the technological development in the country has contributed to its growth. Technological changes have made it much easier to contract and make it possible for freelancers to find work. Another factor is that due to the stringent labor laws in India, many companies prefer to have a contract labor force. Many changes have been made in India both in factors like digitization of the economy and reforms on the labor front.

The Indian government needs to pay more attention to the development of gig economy. Because currently, the Indian economy is facing unemployment due to lack of inclusive growth. The creation of jobs in the gig economy will boost

employment in the Indian economy. In addition, Indians are facing the problem of unemployment stemming from agriculture. Gig economy will be able to provide gainful employment to such rural youth. This is also likely to improve competition. Short term depending on the volume of work, hiring freelance workers helps companies rationalize their work force and reduce costs. This improves the competition and skills of the companies.

Not only this, it will also give freedom to the workers which can prove to be beneficial for them. The gig economy gives workers the freedom to work at their convenience, with no fixed hours. They can switch jobs as per their interest areas. When labor companies live in bondage with them, they do not go anywhere else much. There is an opportunity for women in this. The requirement of working fixed hours per day deters women from taking up formal sector jobs. The gig economy provides women with workplace jobs that offer flexibility in terms of working hours.

Concerns also exist about the lack of job security and benefits for gig economy workers. It is estimated that the gig economy will further expand in India in the future and hence it should be supported by government rules and policies to protect the rights of workers and ensure fair treatment towards them. Many gig workers in India are not covered by labor codes and do not have access to benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans.

A survey by Catalyst Fund and KarmaLife found that 88 percent of gig economy workers ran out of money before the end of the month. Most of them attributed this to rising household and fuel expenses. 90 per cent of the workers surveyed also said that they would like to take a personal loan to meet their family expenses, but cannot do so due to the nature of their job. The survey also pointed out that around 40 per cent of gig Economy workers had no insurance, and only 24 per cent of them had employer-provided insurance

cover. The remaining 36 per cent workers bought insurance by paying the premium themselves.

According to a research by Flourish Ventures, before the pandemic, most gig economy workers earned above Rs 25,000, while after the pandemic, nine out of ten workers were earning less than Rs 15,000. There are many possible reasons for this high income fluctuation. Gig workers in India are often paid less than traditional workers and lack the same legal protections as them.

The gig economy is heavily dependent on technology and internet access, which again creates a barrier for those who do not have access to these resources. This further increases the inequality. Gig workers may lack the same social connections and support systems as traditional employees, as they often work independently and lack a physical workplace.

The government is considering providing affordable medical care at subsidized rates to employees working in the gig economy in Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospitals and dispensaries. This can provide relief to the companies associated with the gig economy as they have to pay for their employees. Social Security will not have to bear the cost. The Social Security Code Bill, 2019 was introduced by the government in the Lok Sabha in the last session of Parliament. The bill proposes to provide social security cover for the first time in India to employees working in the gig economy. The bill states that the government will introduce a scheme to bring gig workers under ESIC.

The Government of India should establish clear regulations and policies for the gig economy to ensure the safety of gig workers and companies to be held accountable. The government should invest in education and training programs to improve the skills of gig workers and increase their income-earning potential.

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On hearing of the Adani exposé by Hindenburg Research, I was, frankly, not surprised. The Adani Group's meteoric rise was always too fast and furious to be true. There was something surreal about it. It was like a company's profits jumping suddenly by four-digit percentage points, or a fund promising 200% returns on investments. Sometimes, in such cases, the business entity concerned is caught embarrassingly exposed, like a chit fund or a Ponzi scheme. Also, quite expectedly, as soon as the long list of allegations became public knowledge, two responses emerged as reactions. The first focused on it as an attack of an evil Western world on India out of sheer jealousy. Nothing could touch India, and the nation (equated with the Adani business empire) would continue to march on. The second response was that it was a case of crony capitalism and an example of the cosy connections between big business and the top political leadership. This self-seeking nexus would ruin India's reputation and hurt its economy. Markets would tumble and crash. If indeed such a thing occurs, the interesting point to note would be whether the government bails the businessman out by giving him a clean chit of health.

If one leaves these extreme, rather predictable, responses aside, the first thing that comes to mind is this: how does one separate the wheat from the chaff? How to find the truth-claims on either side? The only way to get it straight is to examine the allegations and the rebuttals in detail. That is the only logical way. However, investigations take time. Moreover, in an overwhelming majority of cases, hardly any concrete, publicly available information emerges after years of probing. They become tales of conspiracy that abound in every society. What happened in Bofors? What happened in the Rafale deal? Or Pegasus?

So if one cannot be comfortable with the extreme responses, and one also cannot expect the truthclaims to be tested and revealed, what could one possibly do? One way would be to deconstruct

the system out of which the episode emerged — the story of Gautam Adani's phenomenal growth, his close links with political leaders at the highest level, the way in which the financial assets and credit markets might have been duped and, finally, how regulators missed out or looked the other way.

The textbook model of a market claims that no single player, whether buyer or seller, can influence outcomes in terms of prices and quantities transacted. It also claims that the participants together could not have done any better than the outcome thrown up by an unfettered market. This is referred to as economic efficiency. Economists know that in reality no market actually works that well. The ability of sellers to influence prices and volumes is omnipresent. Indeed, there is no general theory of economic markets except the claim that prices and quantities emerge through an interaction of exchanging buyers and sellers. The core point is to maximise advantage, if possible even at the expense of others. Since manipulation is impossible in an ideally competitive market, there must be an autonomous correction mechanism that equates supply to demand. Hence, some commentators have referred to the Adani meltdown as a market correction. If it is, it is certainly not through an autonomous channel; it was triggered by an investigative study of the firms.

The specific allegations against the Adani Group have been around the use of off-shore shell companies located in tax havens to transfer, through fraudulent accounting, money and stocks to these shell companies; using these resources to manipulate and drive up the Adani Group's share prices, and then using these inflated-value shares

as collaterals to obtain large loans from financial institutions. If the Adani Group did indulge in such practices, as alleged, then it did not do something spectacularly unusual. If Hindenburg, or any other research firm worth its salt, took up such investigative projects, a very large number of big, medium and small companies across the world would be seen to be doing exactly these, albeit in different doses and degrees.

The first line of checks against such practices getting out of control is the audit function in a listed entity. Clearly, in the Adani case, the auditors must have behaved opportunistically in furthering their own economic gains or have been astoundingly stupid. The memories of Arthur Andersen and Enron come to mind.

The second line of defence is institutional regulators. Market regulators often turn out to be myopic in their actions and in their ability to scrutinise disclosures. It may have been a similar case in this instance.

A third line of defence is whistleblowers. Why does not an accounts executive, who knows the kind of gaming going on, blow the whistle? The strength and the scale of the power of big business against a small whistleblower is not comparable. A whistleblower can be bought off, or even made to disappear in the blink of an eye.

The fourth line of defence comprises the moral scruples of the people in the business entity in charge of corporate governance. Manipulative executives often make sure that the board gets an incomplete view of the total picture. In other cases, the board might choose to shut its eyes in the hope that the near-term future would be rosier and things would be forgotten in the long run. This is where

corporate ethics comes into play. In the boardroom, there are regulatory or legal constraints. Violating them would be tantamount to an illegal action. Such decisions are unacceptable. There are other, more nuanced, situations where there are no clear laws, nor any clear right or wrong. This is where individual morality is usually rationalised by the claim that enhancing individual advantage is necessary for the greater good of society. If the captain of industry is taking the nation's economy forward, what is all the fuss about giving a little nudge to share valuations? The megalomania is real: that is why Mr Adani thinks an attack on his business is an attack on India.

Finally, the one important reason for the attention Mr Adani has drawn, apart from the sheer size of his empire, is his wellknown, long-time proximity to the highest political leadership. However, this too is nothing new. Capitalism is essentially based on cronyism — without nudges from politicians, no tycoon could arrive or survive at the top. The State has always been the sales force of big business. There is a symbiotic relationship: business requires the support and blessings of the government, while politicians need financial contributions from business to win elections. Big business and big politics have always been very comfortable bedfellows.

What we witness in the Adani story is a negative print of the raw cut of capitalism. When washed well and hung-dried, we get to see the positive print of modernity: India on the march in a global market. It is not a question of right or wrong; it is one of who has more power. I expect Mr Adani to win. Capitalism unchained is about keeping the cookie jar perpetually full. It is a familiar story, after all.

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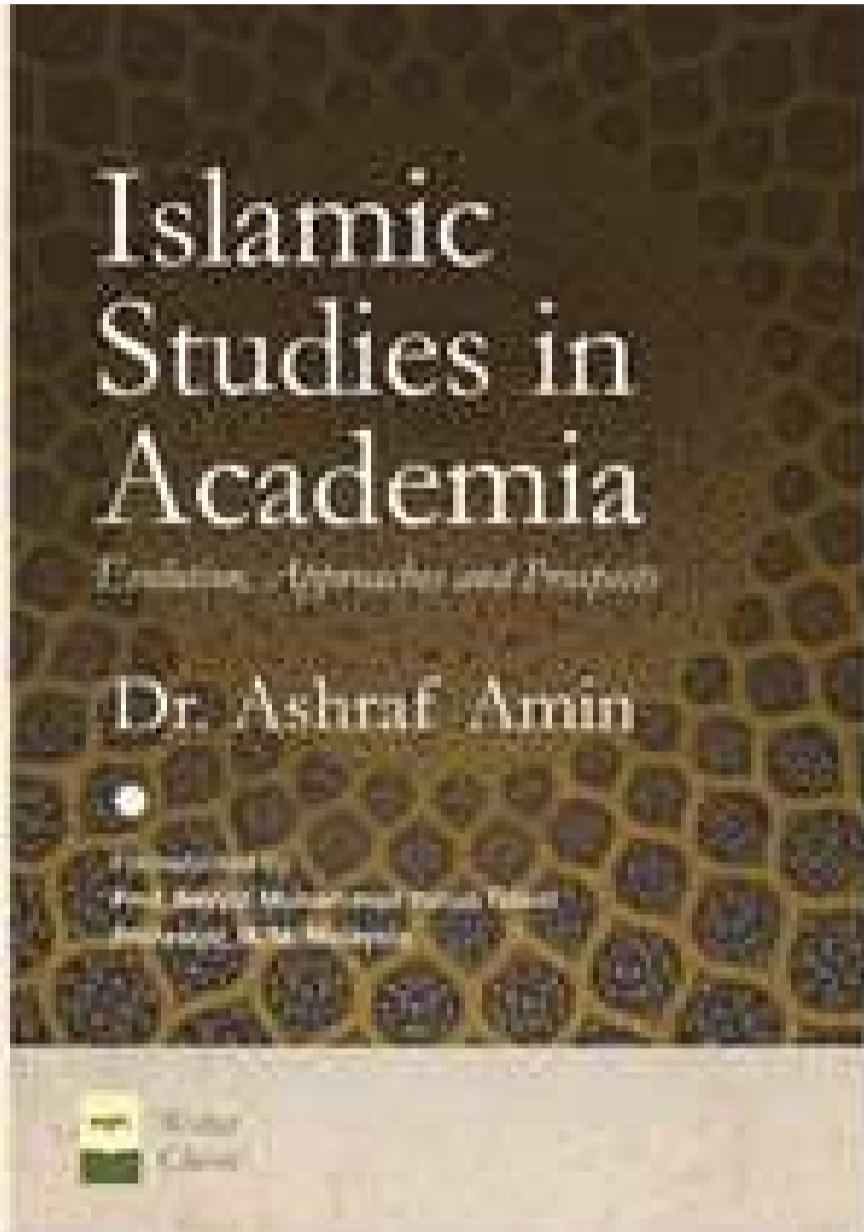
Familiar Script

Anup Sinha

BOOK REVIEW

Mapping 'Islamic Studies' Discipline: Evolution, Advancement and Approaches

READING TWO RECENT WORKS PUBLISHED FROM HYDERABAD AND KASHMIR



Title: *Islamic Studies in Academia: Evolution, Approaches and Prospects*

Author: Dr. Ashraf Amin

Publication Details: Kulgam,

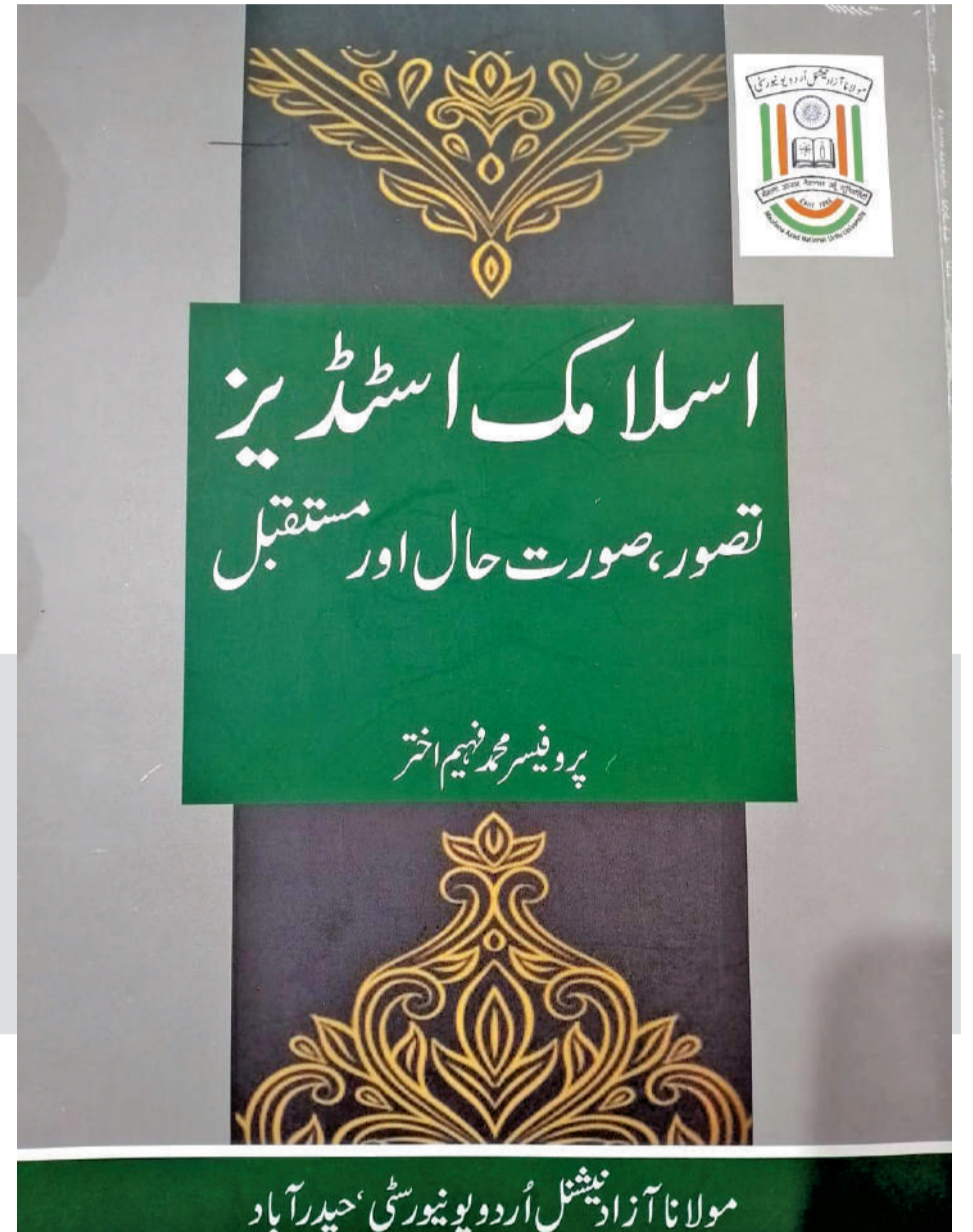
Kashmir: Wular Publishing House (WPH), January, 2023; Pages: xii+146; ISBN: 978-93-90666-28-7; Paperback; Price: 350/-

Title: *Islamic Studies: Concept, Present Scenario and Future*

Editor: Prof. Mohd. Fahim Akhtar

Editor: Prof. Mohd. Fahim Akhtar

Publication Details: Hyderabad: Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), August 2022; Pages: 184; ISBN: 978-93-95203-58-6; Paperback; Price: 225/-



Dr Tauseef Ahmad Parry

“Two recent works from MANUU and Kashmir narrate and describe the history of Islamic studies subject at Global level, concise but comprehensively”

Back in 1990, Prof. Syed Maqbool Ahmad (in an Urdu quarterly, *Islam aur Asr-e Jadid*, 22, 1: 5-18, pp. 6, 16) wrote: “Islamic Studies, as a subject dealing with the study of Islamic history, culture and civilization, is not a new discipline”; “its name is new”, but the not the subject itself and the contents it covers, because “the discipline is as old as Orientalism itself.” Orientalism, literally the study of the Orient/ East, is here taken specifically to mean the study of Islam and Muslims. This is the general conception of the discipline, which has passed through different stages/ phases before it got this specific name, as become evident from many works, including *Mapping Islamic Studies: Genealogy, Continuity and Change* (Azim Nanji, 1997), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Richard Martin, 2001) and *Bloomsbury Companion to Islamic Studies* (Clinton Bennett, 2013), to name a few: Orientalism, Theology, Religious Studies, Areas Studies and Islamic Studies. The concept of Islamic Studies as a social science discipline “has a long journey in contemporary world, having different meanings and perspectives in Arab world and in Western world”.

The history of Islamic Studies, both in the West and East, is centuries old. In the West, it has passed through different stages/ phases (beginning with Orientalism). In the East, including the Indian context, its history dates back, to speak from the academic/ teaching point of view, to the early decades of 20th century. Similarly, in J&K it was introduced from late 1980s.

It will not be unfair to add here that the history of subject is both ‘extensive and complex’. It has passed through different stages, and has transformed, especially in the past few decades, tremendously. Keeping in view the significance of the subject, its long history both in Western as well as in Eastern/ Arab world and considering the fact that it is subject of utmost importance in India too, so there have been many attempts to narrate and recount its journey. Though most of these attempts have been made by the Western scholars (like Nanji, Martin, Bennett and others) with a more focus on the evolution and development of this subject within the western perspective, there are few attempts by the Muslims of India too to recount the journey of this discipline, at global level in general and in the Indian context in particular. Two (2) such recent attempts are: Prof. Mohd. Fahim Akhtar’s *Islamic Studies: Concept,*

Present Scenario and Future (published in August 2022) and Dr. Ashraf Amin’s *Islamic Studies in Academia: Evolution, Approaches and Prospects* (published in January 2023): Former is a compilation of the selected papers presented in a two day national seminar organized by ‘Department of Islamic Studies’ (DoIS), MANUU and *Henry Martin Institute*, Hyderabad (HMI) on April 24-25, 2019, while as later attempts to put Islamic Studies as a social science discipline in the proper perspective by accounting and narrating its development in general and in Kashmir in particular, with the aim “at facilitating the understanding of Islamic Studies as a social science discipline and its current status in addition to its future prospects” (p.3).

The objective of the Seminar organized by DoIS, MANUU was “to elaborate and examine the achievements of Islamic Studies in recent past, and to chalk out the action plan for future.” In this seminar, a total of thirty-two (32) papers (both in Urdu and English) were presented by senior and young faculty members and researchers of the subject—from Kashmir to Kolkata. Out of these, eighteen (18) papers have been compiled in Prof. Akhtar’s *Islamic Studies: Concept, Present Scenario and Future*, which are preceded by ‘Message’, ‘Preface’ and ‘Introductory Remarks’, respectively by the VC, Director of Translation and Publication Division, and HoD, DoIS, MANUU, and ends with Seminar Report (by Dr. M. Irfan Ahmad) and ‘Suggestions and Recommendations’ (by the senior and young paper presenters).

Compiled by Prof. Akhtar (Head, DoIS, MANUU), *Islamic Studies: Concept, Present Scenario and Future* consists of eighteen (18) chapters and are divided thematically under three (3) parts: Part-I, “Islamic Studies: Concept and History” (chapters 1-4); Part-II, “Institutions of Islamic Studies in India and their Contribution” (chapters 5-10); and Part-III, “Islamic Studies: Curriculum, Contemporary Relevance and Future (Prospects)” (chapters 11-18).

The main theme of the chapters 1 and 3 in part-I and chapters 11-15 in part-III is the discipline of Islamic Studies at the global and national level, its genesis and development in East and West, transitions and transformations of the subject from early stages to the current times as well as contemporary relevance, challenges, and future prospects of this discipline. Few chapters threw light on the journey of the subject from ‘Orientalism to Islamic Studies (chapter 3), contemporary issues/ trends in research to be explored in Islamic studies (chapter 12) and Chapters 2, 4 (in part-I), 5-10 (part-II) and 16-18 (part-III) discuss the teaching and research, curriculum and contribution of

various departments/ institutes of Islamic Studies, spread throughout India (like *Jamia Milia Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University, Aliah University, MANUU, Osmania University, Lucknow University*), contribution of Zakir Hussain Institute of Islamic Studies (JMI) and Islamic Studies through the Distance Education at MANUU as well as a general survey of the development of the subject in India, since 1920. Many chapters also provide comparative analysis and evaluation of the curriculum taught at various universities (chapter 17) as well as content analysis of selected courses like ‘Islam in India’ (chapter 16).

All in all, *Islamic Studies: Concept, Present Scenario and Future* is a valuable and significant contribution which will prove helpful to the students and researchers of Islamic studies not only to know genesis and genealogy of the subject at global level and in Indian context but also to know about the curriculum, teaching and research in this subject, while not overlooking its challenges and future prospects.

Dr. Ashraf Amin’s *Islamic Studies in Academia* (published in January 2023 by a local publishing house) attempts to account and narrate the history of Islamic Studies, as a social science discipline, in general and in Kashmir in particular and tries to put it in the proper perspective referring to the genesis and genealogy of this subject from Western and Islamic perspective by looking at its present scenario and taking into consideration the future prospects as well (pp. xii, 3). In the Introduction (pp.1-4), the author (presently working as an Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, *Central University of Kashmir*) presents the overall objective and purpose of this work in these words: the book attempts “to acquaint the readers to the discourse on Islam and Islamic Studies in the Western and Muslim scholarly circles. The work is not an exhaustive account of the historical journey of Islamic studies in Muslim and Western scholarship but ... [it does] not fail in offering a healthy overview of Islamic studies as an academic discipline in Western and Muslim academia till date.” (p. 3)

Divided into eight (8) chapters (excluding Introduction and Conclusion), preceded by Acknowledgements, Preface (pp. x-xii) and Introduction (pp. 1-4) and a Foreword (pp. vii-ix) by Prof. Sayyid Muhammad Yunus Gilani (presently at *IUM, Malaysia*) and ends with Conclusion (pp. 97-101), Bibliography (pp. 105-110) and Appendix (pp. 111-146).

In his ‘Foreword’, Prof. Gilani (who is a pioneering figure in establishing Islamic Studies at Shah-i-Hamdan Institute of Islamic Studies (SHIIS), *University of Kashmir* in particular and in J&K in

general, ‘Teacher of the Teachers’ in this field and has been aptly described by Dr. Amin as “one of the unparalleled Islamic Studies scholars” [p. 113]) puts forth that “Islamic Studies is [an] all comprehensive and all-embracing discipline”, which “aims at overall personality building of an individual on Islamic lines” for it is “a life-long process of study and development” (p. vii). He appreciates the efforts of Dr. Amin in these words: “the author discusses the fallacies of the Western scholarship in understanding Islam and Muslims; he has considerably deliberated upon the genesis of Islamic Studies within Islamic framework” and thus calls this book as a helpful reference guide in “understanding and comprehension of Islamic Studies as an academic discipline” (p. ix).

In its eight (8) chapters, the book throws light, albeit briefly, on the genesis and genealogy, evolution and growth, methods and approaches, challenges and prospects of this discipline by discussing its ‘Nature, Origin, Definitions’, ‘Western’ and ‘Islamic’ contexts, Traditional and Modernist Approaches, place and position of Islamic studies as a social science subject, followed by three chapters on its place in Modern-day Academia, in Malaysian Seminaries and its history and growth in J&K. The main points, arguments and historical facts vis-à-vis the concept and growth of Islamic studies as a multi/inter/trans-disciplinary social science subject are summarized below:

- The field of Islamic Studies, which is often taken for-granted (resulting in misunderstanding it), emerged as a formal social science discipline in the West at the dawn of the modern era, but a lot has changed since then (p. xi);
- The emergence of the modern academic study of Islam in the West was primarily associated with the Oriental Studies or Orientalism, which later on witnessed two major developments: ‘scientific study of the history of religion’ (or as a part of Religious Studies) and studying Islam/ Muslims as a social science subject under the ‘study of “other” cultures and peoples’, revealing that its boundaries were constantly being revised (pp. 8, 9);
- The study of Islam and Muslims in the Western academy has a long and perplexed history (p. 19);
- Western studies of Islam progressed from viewing it in the 12th century as a Christian heresy or a false religion to more systematic and disciplined ap-

- proaches in the late 16th and 17th centuries (p. 24);
- The contemporary approach of Western scholarship towards Orient, especially the Muslim Orient, would be labelled as ‘New Orientalism’ that views Islam and Muslims in terms of ‘anti-modernity and anti-democracy’ (p. 32);
- In Islamic framework, Islamic Studies is a faith-based study of Islamic religious sciences intended to preserve Islam through approximate interpretations for posterity (p. 37);
- There are two major trends in studying Islam, viz., ‘imperial prejudices’ and ‘systematic view’; and since the second half of 20th century, later has become ‘general trend’ (p. 43);
- Public interest in Islam has increased dramatically in the first decade of 21st century, especially since the events of 9/11, which has powerfully affected the discipline of Islamic studies (pp. 74-75); and
- Inter-disciplinary and trans-regional centres for the study of Islam and Muslims in modern world have been identified as key locations for the development of new approaches to Islamic studies (p.76).

This is followed by a chapter on “Islamic Studies in Jammu and Kashmir” (pp. 92-96) in which the author narrates the history of Islamic Studies as “one of the prime subjects in humanities and social sciences” which has seen an “increasing interest” among the students for its “multi-disciplinary nature” (p. 92). It provides a brief profile of the departments of Islamic Studies in a chronological order with a focus on their academic achievements since their inception, viz., SHIIS, *University of Kashmir* (CUK; 2017) and DoIS, *Islamic University of Science and Technology* (IUST; 2006), Department of Religious Studies (DoRS), *Central University of Kashmir* (CUK; 2017) and DoIS, *Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University*, Rajouri (BGSBU; 2017). He describes these departments, respectively, as: SHIIS has “acted as pioneer in the progress and consolidation of Islamic studies in modern academia”; DoIS, IUST has “made a unique name in academics” by generating a “great atmosphere of learning and research”; DoRS, CUK is the “first of its type where religious understanding, religious literacy and Islamic sciences meet for a joint academic stride” and is “fine blend” of trans/inter/multi-disciplinary “approaches in religion and Islamic studies”; and DoIS, BGSBU, though youngest of all, has “outshined all

other departments of Islamic studies in organizing seminars, workshops, conferences despite limited resources” (pp. 92, 93, 94, 95). However, one finds it surprising to note that the author has referred to the journal, *Revelation* (which is still in its infancy) published by DoRS, CUK but has ignored the SHIIS, KU’s annual journal *Insight Islamicus*—published since 2001 and indexed in London-based *Index Islamicus*. Also, surprising is the fact that in profiling these departments, he has focused on faculty members of SHIIS, KU while in others he has not mentioned the names of any faculty member and even date of establishment of the department is not mentioned in each case.

These chapters, most of them being brief, are followed by ‘Conclusion’ in which he tries to summarize overall history of the subject from Western and Muslim perspectives and concludes that “Islamic studies, as taught in the west, is a discipline that seeks to explain what the Islamic [read as Muslim] world has achieved in the past and what the future holds for it” (p. 102).

In the Appendix (pp. 111-146), he has provided an academic profile of a dozen faculty members of Islamic studies who have worked and/or working in the universities of KU, IUST, CUK and BGSBU.

Though addressed, and written for the students and scholars of Islamic studies, the book has many shortcomings; some of them include: inconsistency in referencing style and in Bibliography; incomplete or no references for many quotations and statements (see e.g., pp. 8, 16, 41, 5-56, 59, 62, 67); indirect/secondary references for easily available/ accessible books (see e.g., pp. 41, 50, 52); type errors (pp. 97, 133); and no coverage or profiling of Islamic studies departments of India.

Keeping aside these shortcomings, Dr. Ashraf Amin’s *Islamic Studies in Academia* is a valuable reference guide for the students and scholars of Islamic studies which will prove helpful to them in understanding and comprehension of Islamic Studies as an academic discipline.

All in all, both these works by Prof. Akhtar and Dr. Amin make a substantial contribution to the literature (in Urdu and English) on narrating and describing the history of the discipline of Islamic studies as a social science subject at the local, national and global levels. Both will prove helpful in knowing and understanding the genesis, genealogy, growth, approaches, challenges and prospects of Islamic Studies as an academic discipline.

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I-League

Real Kashmir Play NEROCA At TRC Today

Observer News Service
SRINAGAR: Real Kashmir FC is all set to take on NEROCA FC in I-League today at Synthetic Turf TRC here, with kick off at 2:00 PM.

Real Kashmir look rejuvenated under new head coach Gifton Noel-Williams, as the Srinagar-based side ended its eight-game unbeaten run by defeating Sudeva Delhi FC 4-2 on February 8. The Snow Leopards' match against NEROCA would be the side's second consecutive home game, and a positive result would lift them in the I-League table.

Real Kashmir are currently seventh in the points table and three points would take them closer to the top three posi-

tions. Coach Noel-Williams will be aware of the danger NEROCA pose. The Imphal, Manipur-based side is just two points behind them.

"I'm sure NEROCA are a team that wants to avenge the first-leg defeat. But we know how good a team they are and how they play their game. Hopefully we can overcome them with our determination and hunger," Noel-Williams told AIFF.

"There were so many heartening things in the last match but there's still so much to improve on. I'm not going to reveal all my secrets, but I can only say I've been working on some things in the classroom and in practice. Hopefully, some of that work will help tomorrow," he added.

35 Countries Want Russia, Belarus Banned From Olympics

Agencies

A group of 35 countries including the United States, Germany, France, Britain and Japan have unanimously agreed to demand that Russian and Belarusian athletes are banned from the 2024 Olympics, the Lithuanian sports minister said on Friday. With war raging in Ukraine, the Baltic States, Nordic countries and Poland had called on international sports bodies to ban Russian and Belarusian athletes from competing in the Olympics.

Ukraine has threatened to boycott the games if Russian and Belarusian athletes compete and Ukrainian boxer Oleksandr Usyk has said Russians will win "medals of blood, deaths and tears" if allowed to compete. "We are going in the direction that we would not need a boycott because all countries are unanimous," Jurgita Siugzdiniene said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy took part in the online meeting attended by 35 ministers to discuss the call for the ban, a Lithuanian sports ministry spokesperson said earlier. The spokesperson said Zelenskyy's message to participants was that principles of neutrality

cannot apply to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia launched a wave of attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure in the cities of Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia on Friday morning as Ukrainian officials said a long-awaited Russian offensive was under way in the east. However, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach has called on Ukraine to drop threats of a boycott.

The IOC has opened the door for Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete as neutrals. It has said a boycott will violate the Olympic Charter and that its inclusion of Russians and Belarusians is based on a U.N. resolution against discrimination within the Olympic movement. Some 18 months before the competition is due to start, the IOC is desperate to calm the waters. A Games torn asunder by war would be an existential threat to the Olympics and its message of global peace - not to mention a huge hit to income.

Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of host city Paris, has said Russian athletes should not take part. However, Paris 2024 organisers have said they will abide by the IOC's decision on the issue.

Club World Cup Final A Turning Point: Ancelotti



Agencies

REBAT: Contesting Saturday's Club World Cup final will hopefully be a turning point for Real Madrid after a difficult season in which they have had to cope with several injured and fatigued players, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Friday.

"Getting here has been very difficult, we have made many sacrifices but we are here, like this club always are, so today is a day to be excited," Ancelotti, who led Real to a LaLiga and Champions League double last season, told a news conference.

"It's a key moment of the season. When you arrive in contention in February... March, is always a decisive time. And we are here as always.

"The Club World Cup is a very important challenge, we are very close to a title that is very important and to be here is a sign that you were successful.

"I will ask my players to go

and enjoy themselves in the final because if they enjoy we will do well." After several key starters were absent from their 4-1 win over Egypt's Al Ahly on Wednesday, Ancelotti confirmed that forward Karim Benzema and defender Eder Militao, who stayed behind in Madrid to treat injuries, joined the team on Thursday and should be available for the final.

"The players are progressing well physically in a decisive stretch of the season," Ancelotti said. "I still believe that the squad has improved compared to last year.

"We will start with the Club World Cup final, a beautiful moment and a title that we are looking forward to winning."

Al Hilal shocked South American champions Flamengo 3-2 in the semi-finals and Ancelotti is looking forward to taking on familiar foe Ramon Diaz, the Saudi Arabian club's Argentine manager, in the showpiece.

3rd Khelo India Winter Games Begin At Gulmarg



Observer News Service

GULMARG: The third edition of the Khelo India Winter Games were declared open by J&K LG Manoj Sinha and Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Friday at Gulmarg. More than 1500 athletes will compete in 11 different winter-sports disciplines in the five day mega sporting event.

The games began with a message by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the participating players.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony, Sports Minister Thakur lauded the J&K Government for developing sports facilities at grassroot level and achieving unprecedented progress in the sports sector in a short span of time.

"What Jammu and Kashmir has done in the world of sports in just three years is a matter of great pride. Indoor stadiums have been built in every district and every village has a

playground. Where once there used to be incidents of stone pelting, today football, wushu and various sports are played there. This is the picture of new Jammu Kashmir," Thakur said.

"Khelo India Youth Games also gives an opportunity to hunt good talent. After which top players are picked up and given a chance at Khelo India-accredited academics. Their boarding and training expenses are borne by the Government of India," the minister added.

In his address, LG Manoj Sinha said that Khelo India Winter Games will celebrate and honour sporting excellence and witness the contests of skill and endurance of athletes.

"The entire country at the moment is united by the 3rd Winter Games dream. Each player participating will become the best ambassador of J&K," he said.

"With the help of Union Sports Ministry we will work

for establishing Center of Excellence for Winter Games. The location has already been identified. All efforts are being made to provide opportunities to sportspersons to excel in their career," the LG noted.

On the occasion, Union Sports Minister and J&K LG e-launched 40 Khelo India Centres across Jammu and Kashmir. The Centres have been dedicated to all the budding sportspersons of J&K.

At the onset of the inaugural ceremony, Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary, Youth Affairs & Sports J&K and Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council shared the achievements of J&K in national and international sports arena.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to LG; Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Lt Gen Amardeep Singh Aujla, GOC, 15 Corps; representatives of various sports organizations, prominent sports personalities and sports-lovers witnessed the inaugural ceremony.



Ton-Up Rohit, All-Rounder Jadeja Put India On Top

Press Trust of India

NAGPUR: Skipper Rohit Sharma conjured up one of his most impressive Test hundreds under pressure against a quality Australian attack as India vaulted to a crucial 144-run lead in the series-opener after ending the day two at 321 for 7, here Friday.

Rohit (120) displayed class and composure of the highest order and in the process became the first Indian captain to have scored a century in all three formats.

While Rohit's ninth Test hundred is worth its weight in gold, Ravindra Jadeja's (66 not out) 18th half-century is also priceless. The all-rounder's knock will be equally important in the context of the game. Jadeja once again showed his true worth by adding 61 runs for the sixth wicket with Rohit and another 81 runs for the unconquered eighth-wicket with Axar Patel (52 batting), who is also playing a fine hand.

It was a battle of attrition for Indian batters, especially Rohit and Jadeja with the home team putting on board 244 runs on the second day.

On a slow track where other batters found the run-scoring extremely difficult, the Indian captain was concentration-personified.

It had the same class as the 161 he scored in against England in 2021 in the Chennai Test. The opener put his best foot forward against an attack, led by spinners Nathan Lyon (1/98) and Todd Murphy (5/82), who got a five-for on Test debut.

In fact, both the off-break

bowlers came round the wicket against right-handers to stem the flow of runs and succeeded partially.

It took Rohit 171 balls to reach his hundred. He hit 15 boundaries and two sixes in a knock that spanned more than four and half hours.

Once second new ball was taken, Cummins dismissed Rohit with an unplayable delivery that was fast and also moved away late after pitching.

However Jadeja stood firm and got good support from fellow all-rounder Axar to further consolidate India's position in the game.

Virat Kohli (12) along with debutants Suryakumar Yadav (8) and Kona Bharat (8) would be disappointed that they didn't score big.

In the case of Kohli, bespectacled Murphy bowled a similar delivery to the former India skipper that had earlier accounted for Cheteshwar Pujara. The young spinner bowled on the fifth stump on the leg side and a faint nick was taken on the second attempt by wicket-keeper Alex Carey.

Surya became Lyon's first victim as the off-break bowler breached his defence.

In the morning, captain Cummins had set the bait for his opposite number with a deep fine leg and deep mid-wicket fielder but bowled fuller during his morning spell.

Scott Boland also toiled manfully but once Carey stood up to the stumps, it was evident that there was no help for fast bowlers on day two.



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