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Founder
Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

Patron
Professor P.K. Abdul Azis
Vice Chancellor

*Aligarh Muslim University Gazette* originated as *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*. Launched by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in 1866, it projected a vision much ahead of its times. Sir Syed is known for his devotion to education, support for intellectual pursuits and commitment to public welfare.

Currently *Aligarh Muslim University Gazette* is a monthly journal brought out by the Publications Division, A.M.U. in cooperation with all university divisions. The Gazette promotes values and achievements that foster a sense of pride in belonging to the University. The goal is to encourage positive exchange of ideas and information.
Tile, Victoria Gate

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From the Editor’s Desk

For Sir Syed, journalism was not just a form of impromptu and ephemeral writing but it was the most effective medium of initiating a stimulating dialogue with his people on all possible topics related to their lives. The questions pertaining to etiquette, morals, manners, social behavior, educational advancement, political aspirations and spiritual consciousness always fired his imagination to. Not as a social reformer, educationist, theologian, thinker, political ideologue but as a journalist and purveyor of modernism, Sir Syed has many ‘firsts’ to his credit.

Sir Syed was the first Indian journalist who had set multilingual journalism in motion. In 1866, he launched the first ever multilingual newspaper, “The Aligurh Institute Gazette”, which appeared simultaneously in four languages-Urdu, English, Persian and Arabic. The editorial content of the Gazette was completely devoid of sensation. All issues related to ethics, religion, health, hygiene, agriculture, commerce, trade, business, social ills and literature were discussed exhaustively without an iota of emotional rush. Sir Syed made a conscious effort to keep sentimentalism at bay and kept the readers fully abreast of new advances and discoveries.

The special issue of the Gazette is intended to pay a modest tribute to the first editor of the Gazette. Eminent writers Nirad C. Chaudhry, Chanchal Sarkar and Rawlinson’s well-written pieces lay in oblivion are reproduced here.

The Gazette intends to publish “Book Review” column regularly. Also some important articles carried by the Gazette during Sir Syed’s time will also appear under a new column “From the Gazette’s Archives”. Research activities and academic accomplishments of the faculty members, research scholars and students are also to be zeroed in by the Gazette.

(Dr. M. Shafey Kidwai)
Aligarh Muslim University

— Nirad C. Chaudhuri

I have just paid a visit to the Muslim University of Aligarh, and have discovered to my surprise that it is not what I thought it would be.

On the contrary, looking at its life today I have come to feel that we may still find a solution of the problem of Hindu-Muslim co-existence in India by unreservedly accepting what the University stands for, as the Muslim antithesis to the Hindu thesis to arrive at a synthesis in which there will be no fusion of the two, no question of the abandonment of the historic Hindu or historic Muslim personality, but which will result in the creation of a dimorphous society in which each element will be complementary to the other. Let me see it down as my deliberate opinion that any talk of ‘Indianizing’, the Hindus and the Muslims of India is not only unpractical, but is also dangerous, because the whole clamour is for de-Islamizing the Muslim without de-Hinduizing the Hindu. This can only lead to more bitterness and conflict, and not reduce their present intensity.

Dislike and Suspicion

But before I go further, I would set down that from my boyhood I had a dislike for Aligarh. The tangible cause was the behaviour of the only Muslim young man of Kishorganj my birth place, who had gone to Aligarh for education. His name was Kazim-ud-din, and he was son of Azim-ud-din munshi, a mukthar of the town, who later endowed a school. The young man sported a striped college jacket, flannel trousers and a straw hat and looked altogether like a bad imitation of an English public school boy. He spoke English very often, and he spoke it with an accent so different from that of Mymensingh, though not with quite the Oxford accent, that I took a great dislike to him. We looked upon him as a jackdaw of Kishorganj decked out in the peacock’s plumes of England got through Aligarh.

Now, at Aligarh, the other day I saw a group photograph of the earliest batch of students who were a much superior edition of our Kazim-ud-din. These young men looked like very successful imitation of the undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge of the late nineteenth century not only in clothes but also in appearance and air. Even without seeing this photograph I had formed the notion that Aligarh was creating the Muslim counterpart of the Anglicized Hindu, for whom I have the greatest aversion.

The other reason for my dislike or prejudice was my suspicion of pan-Islamism, which as a young Hindu nationalist I acquired very early in life. I thought that Aligarh was the cradle (we preferred to regard it as the Hot-bed) of the Islamic revivalism in India. Under the teaching of Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Vivekananda most of us had become Hindu revivalists but were not on that account prepared to concede our Hinduisms in its revivified form as nationalism and regarded Islam as anti-national. As between the Hindu and Muslim of India it has always been an ethic of double standards.

We knew indeed that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had created Aligarh College to wean the Muslims of India from their static and retrogressive Islamic life, which also fostered a barren hatred for British rule in India and of the West in general and that he wanted to modernize them. This task was urgent, because through their rancour the India Muslims were depriving themselves of the opportunities offered to Indians by British
administration. The British knew this, and were suspicious of the Muslims. I have read in a military report published in 1878 that the Muslims of the upper provinces were in a state of impotent disaffection, and this, was specially the case with those of Oudh. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wanted to bring them out of this unhealthy backwater. But we suspected this very emergence. We thought that the modernized Muslim would only be a renovated Muslim and for us Hindus he would be the Muslim stork instead of the Muslim log. I do not think we were wholly wrong in this anticipation. Certainly, the reform movement inaugurated by Sir Syed created a very strong group consciousness among the Muslims, and in the end it was this consciousness which led to the partition of India. So far, our suspicion of the spirit of Aligarh was not wholly unfounded.

Not valid today
But need we read Aligarh with the same suspicion today, or it is the same Aligarh which fostered the separatist feeling? I do not think so, Aligarh remains true to Islamic way of life, and, as I believe it is wise in remaining so. But it is shaping the loyalty in a different spirit. It is trying to retain the socio-cultural distinctiveness of the Muslims only as contributory factors in the creation of a multicultural society in India. It is remaining Islamic without in any way sacrificing modernization or the absorption of Western influences, I found its Islamism to be far less reactionary than the Hinduism of an organization like the Jana Sangh.

On the other hand, its acceptance of Western ways is different from the manner in which the more radical section of the Hindus are adopting European and more especially American ways. Certainly, the Westernizing Hindu in New Delhi is more slavishly imitative of the contemporary West than the Westernizing Muslim at the Aligarh. The latter does not look like a half caste or debased imitation of a modern Yankee as his Hindu counterpart does. Westernization and slavish aping of the lowest democratic ways of the West, remains assimilative and not merely imitative, as it has become among us urban Hindus. Even in European clothes the Muslim teacher of Aligarh does not look like the Brown Sahib of New Delhi. He is more individual and more authentic.

Apart from this basic cultural balance in a product of cultural synthesis, what I found at Aligarh was the education atmosphere. In these days when university education is going to pieces all over India under the influence of politics, it gave me the impression of having a steady and genuine academic life. I do not see that in Delhi, and in Calcutta such a thing does not, of course, exist. Externally, Aligarh is a university city with as much beauty of outward appearance as it is possible for any city on the Indo-Gangetic plain to have. It is clean and tree-lined roads, its gardens and lawns, and its buildings are soothing to the mind. I learned that the gardens and the lawns were the special interest of Dr. Zakir Husain, when he was at Aligarh.

Another pleasing feature of the external appearance of Aligarh is the decorous dressing by the students. The extravagance and aberrations, or the shabbiness and dirtiness which one sees among the students of Delhi, for instance, and certainly at so in Calcutta, are absent in Aligarh. No yahooism in dress is tolerated there. Everybody has to be properly dressed, and I noticed both the European and the Muslim costume. I was specially struck by the costume of the girl students. They were wearing the same Shalwar and Kamiz as a majority of girls in Delhi. But with what a difference! There was no trace
of meretricious appearance which the Hindu girls in Shalwar and Kamiz create. That has strengthened my disapproval of the wearing of Muslim clothes by Hindu girls. In the same clothes the Muslim girls looked refined and elegant, which the Hindu girls never do. It seemed to me that these girls were a modern version of the elegant damsels I have seen depicted in Persian paintings by Bihzad and others. That happens when a set of persons are to the manner born. If the Hindu girls were to give up the Sari I think they would look far more respectable if they had only ornament with hip griddles as the figures in Hindu sculpture have, than in Shalwar and Kamiz. To tell the truth they are to that made manner born, and not to dishonest nudity. In shalwar and kamiz the girls can only be piquent at their best.

A third feature of the academic life of Aligarh I found in the amenities provided for both the teachers and the students. It was indeed a task to provide hostel accommodation for about three thousand students who were resident in the university. But the accommodation is not only adequate but also comfortable. The teachers, on their part, have clubs whose counterparts I do not see in Delhi.

Cordial Relations

Last of all I must single out the understanding and sympathy that exists between the university authority and teachers on the one hand and the students on the other. There is none of that distressing alienation which marks educational life in other universities. There are more contacts of every description between the teachers and the students, with sympathy and understanding on both sides.

All this I attribute to education at Aligarh, both curricular and extra-curricular, being based on an authentic way of life shared by both the students and teacher. Aligarh is an educational community in which education counts, instead of being a minor element. No sound and effective system of education can exist without a sound and living ideology. That exist at Aligarh, and hat does not exist in the other universities of India. So they are rent by conflicts of loyalties, ideas, as well as of temperament and character. I shall now revert to my original point. If loyalty to the Islamic way of life has given this stability to the academic life of Aligarh, it would be madness to take it away or try to destroy that loyalty. On the contrary, we should take a lesson from it for the Hindu-Muslim relations in general. The only way to establish friendly and co-operative relations between the Hindus and Muslims of India is to recognize the legitimacy of the Muslims by creating among the Hindus a loyalty of the same type as the Muslims bear to Islam. In simple words, the two communities can come to terms only if the two ways of life are recognized to be equally valid and good for the communities. Then there will be understanding between the two.
MUCH MORE THAN A UNIVERSITY

Chanchal Sarkar

Of the residential universities that I know, Aligarh has always seemed especially pleasant. It has the necessary ingredients—a campus small enough to encourage neighbourliness, modern facilities in an attractive setting, informality and tradition. Even a muster of 7,800 students hasn’t been able to shake all this yet.

Sir Syed Ahmed’s house (which he quit to die elsewhere because he and his son had fallen out) is now being rebuilt according to the original plan. It will recall tradition and one hopes, remind people that for his time, Sir Syed was a much criticized revolutionary.

Some likable traditions are apparently fading. Freshmen say they don’t find the seniors as helpful and considerate as they were required to be. In appearance, Aligarh is still pretty. When he was Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Zakir Husain did a great deal to make Aligarh conscious of lawns and gardens. Victoria Tower, the courtyards, the silhouette of the University Mosque at dusk, the billowing profusion of bougain-villaea all remind one of the courts and quads of older British Universities.

Difficult Role

Aligarh was never destined to be just a university. Even today it has a very difficult role which Jayaprakash Narayan tried to spell out at the convocation address. He spoke of “the hangover in the minds of Indian Muslims from the days of the two-nation theory and the psychological reaction to the militant Hind Rashtra Movement” and he thought that the role of Aligarh University is “to lead the Muslim intelligentsia out of the dilemma in which they are placed.”

The polarization of communal votes is getting to be an accomplished fact. I heard mutterings of this in Allahabad where in some cases, Congress candidates are reported to have encouraged electors not to vote for them but to vote Jan Sangh instead. I noticed that Mr. K. D. Malaviya has confirmed a claim that I heard at Allahabad that Muslim votes which went to a Majlis candidate, contributed substantially to his defeat. People behind the Majlis made this claim about Phulpur and also about a number of other constituencies in U. P. particularly in the Allahabad region, when Muslim votes going to the Majlis were said to have affected the outcome.

Position of Urdu

Such people are well aware that such a development contributes to the communal polarization of votes but they declare themselves helpless. They have played along with the Congress for a long time, they say, and have been disappointed and betrayed. Urdu, they bitterly, complain, has been systematically neglected and devalued, there is discrimination in employment and most other promises have not been kept. Their ‘strategy’ is to link up with the scheduled castes who, in place have also become disenfranchised with the Congress, and thus win enough leverage for a determining position in legislatures and Governments. Risky policy, the tacticians admit. They even say they may be proved wrong but that they must struggle for their identity and not quietly surrender. So obsessed are they with their grievances that the plight of others the non-Maharashtrians in Bombay, for instance, under threat from the Shiv Sena or the Andhras in Telengana has no meaning for them. And all sections of Muslims opinion—Congress, Majilis or anything else in Allahabad—are unanimous in the impression that during the riots in Allahabad that the time of Holi, the Muslims did not get the protection from the authorities that they expected. I am not going into the rights or wrongs of these feelings.
and grievances but simply making the point that they are strong enough to affect allegiance and action.

These attitudes are not as irrelevant to Aligarh University as they might seem. There one can watch the entire spectrum of Muslim reaction and response. I spoke to a number of students and the feeling of discrimination in employment, particularly in the private sectors, is deep among both boys and girls. At one time this, added to the general unemployment resulted in a sizable migration of graduates from the engineering and other faculties to Pakistan. How much of this goes on now is not computed, though it should be. Everyone admits, however, that it still exists. The former vice-chancellor, Mr. Tayabji addressed a very reasonable letter to people in industry asking for Aligarh Graduates. What the net result has been I don’t know, but the students take discrimination and reduce opportunities for granted even while admitting that some of it is due to psychological inhibitions.

Student’s complaints

This is true of the all-India examination. Eight years ago Col. Zaidi, the then Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh, had told me that very few Aligarh students sat for the examination because of the totally unwarranted feelings that they would not be taken in even if they qualified. The reluctance to try still persists and late last year at the National Academy of Administration (Musoorie) I found only one Muslim among the 160 IAS probationers. The director had greatly regretted this and said that Academy, and the Services, wanted more Muslims.

A Graduate in Aligarh’s English Department now studying for the M. A. told me that he and a non-muslim friend had both applied for a number of training schemes for executives that industrial houses have. His friend had been called for some interviews. But not he, though he had secured higher marks in the examination. There may be hundred and one reasons but I merely report the feeling. Mind you, unlike among the politicians, there was no aggressiveness. There was the constant recognition that the country was trying hard to be secular and was not at all like Pakistan but there was sadness and, more tragic, the wish to be ‘realistic’.

Muslim Dilemma

Aligarh University is not at all like Atala, Nakhaskone or Holdabad –some of the predominantly Muslim areas of Allahabad city – but it is caught in the same dilemma that faces Muslim society in India: how to find an identity in a secular society and how to combat the communal polarization where Hindu militancy and Muslim narrowness assist one another to grow. It is a difficult enough dilemma by itself and is not helped at all by the innate conservatism of Indian Muslim society – which has its representatives in campus society, the provocation what the election and election meeting invariably bring, and by the general malaise what covers Indian universities. No wonder that the retreat into religion is market. The Tablighi Jamaat, for instance, (a movement which encourages students to go to villages and teach people to pray) is fairly popular. So are Leftist opinion which offer a path away from communalism but which are today fragmented.

Aligarh tries to carry on the pretence that it is no more than an average Indian university while it is, in fact, one of the critical testing grounds for a secular society. With conviction, purpose and leadership it could make the most important contribution to the India of magnitude and renown that the Founding Fathers of the constitution wished.
Sir Syed Ahmed Khan is perhaps the greatest Mohammadan India has produced since the English became rulers of the country. His family came from Herat of Delhi, and his grandfather was an army commander under the Emperor Alamgir II. Syed Ahmed was born in October 1817. At that time nearly all power had passed to their splendour and pomp. The lad spent much of his early life in the court of Delhi, and was soundly educated by his mother, a pious and learned lady. Like all other Muslim boys he was taught the Quran, and besides this, he studied Arabic and Persian Literature. He learned to love especially the Persian poets of the Sufi sect, and from them he took the enlightened ideas about religion which were a feature of his later life.

In 1836, his father died, and Syed Ahmed, finding little for an ambitious young man to do in the court of Delhi, determined to enter the British service, though his family was opposed to the step. He probably foresaw that the Mughal power was fast coming to an end, and that the British Government was taking its place. He was made a Sheristidar or Court Reader and did so well that he quickly rose to the rank of Munsif of Sub-judge. In 1844 he published an interesting and learned work in Urdu, about the various ruined cities around Delhi, and the famous poets and saints who had flourished there.

Some years later, Syed Ahmed Khan became Munsif of Bijnaur a town of about 13,000 people, between Meerut and Roorkee. He still held this post, when in 1857, the Indian Mutiny broke out. The sepoys of Bengal Army rose and murdered their officers, and soon all appearance of law and order was lost. Some Rohillas came and plundered the town and wished to throw open the jail. There were eight European officers, four ladies and a number of children in the cantonment. Syed Ahmed Khan and the Deputy collector, Rehmat Khan worked magnificently in order to rescue them. In the end Syed Ahmed Khan succeeded in persuading the Rohilla chief to let the Europeans go safely to Meerut.

Meanwhile, Syed Ahmed Khan’s family was in Delhi, which was being besieged by the British troops. When the City was taken by storm, his uncle and cousin, unfortunately, were killed while his mother found shelter in the house of a servant Syed Ahmed Khan went to Delhi and brought his mother to Meerut. But she was so much shaken by the experiences undergone during the siege, that she died of shock about a month later; Syed Ahmed Khan stuck to his post until the rising was finally put down, and did all in his power to help the Government.

Mr. Shakespeare, the Collector of the district, speaking of the work that Syed Ahmed Khan and his companions did at the time said, “I cannot exaggerate the help they afforded me during this period of incessant anxiety and danger. On every occasion of special anxiety and difficulty, such as when the jail broke and I found it advisable to throw the Treasure down the well, the officers in question were ever ready, and behaved with great discretion and courage.’

Sir John Strachey, later Finance Minister to the Government of India, said that no man ever gave nobler proofs of conspicuous courage and loyalty. “No language which I could use”, he declared, “would be worthy of the devotion he showed”. For this work the Government presented Syed Ahmed Khan a Khillat and sword of Honour.

Syed Ahmed Khan afterward published a book on the India mutiny, in which he analysed the causes of that terrible tragedy. The real reason, he wrote, was that the Government of India was out of touch with the people, and did not know what the masses were thinking. Many of the social reforms introduced were misunderstood, and people
thought that their religion was in danger. The real need of the country was education. Had the sepoys of the Bengal Army been educated men, they would never have been misled by the absurd rumours which caused the revolt; lack of education was the cause of the country’s poverty. “Look at England”, he said, “Look how her wealth has increased in the last century. She has had great difficulties to contend with—far greater than those which obstruct the spread of education in this country. In those days she had no railways, no steam, printing press—nothing but her own innate genius and incomquerable will’.

With the terrible tragedy of the Mutiny ever before his eyes, Syed Ahmad Khan set himself to what was to his life work—the enlightenment of his fellow-countrymen. He thought that previous efforts made by such reformers as Lord Bentinck and Macaulay had failed because they were mainly directed towards the spread of English. English could never be the language of any but the few, and the masses could only be reached through their mother-tongue. Aided, therefore, by his friend and future biographer, Colonel Graham, he held a meeting of English and other Europeans at Ghazipur the object of which was to found a society for translating useful work from English in to Urdu. He also founded the Victorial College at Ghazipur for the same purpose. It was built entirely out of the contributions of the local inhabitants. In these endeavours he met with bitter opposition from local Muslims, who thought that the Western ideas would undermine the religious belief of the young, but he stuck to his work with characteristic plaque. His efforts received much encouragement from the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence.

In 1869, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan made the most courageous decision. His two sons had just been awarded State Scholarships, and were about to proceed to England. Although he was now fifty-two and knew little about English manners and social customs, he determined to accompany them. In January 1869, therefore, the party set out on the P. & C. Steamer Baroda. His biographer tells us many amusing anecdotes about the voyage. Thus, one of his fellow passengers was describing the prosperity of the British Empire, which he declared, was due to the Christian religion. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan observed quietly that Jesus Christ was not a rich man.

In English he made many friends, including Thomas Carlyle. The sage of Chelsea had long been interested in the Prophet, whom he had treated rather unfairly in his lectures on ‘Heroes and Hero Worship’. Syed Ahmed was at the time engaged in bringing out his Essays on the Life of Mohammad and the two talked together on the subject far into the night.

What impressed him most of all in English was the state of education of the people. His landlady would discus politics with him and the cabmen waiting for their fares, read the daily newspaper. Even his maid-servant could read and write. How different was all this from the state of things in India, “The progress of the West” he wrote to a friend, “is entirely due to the fact that all the arts and Latin, Greek, Persian or Arabic, the English would be in the same state of ignorance as that in which, I am sorry to say, the Hindumasses India must remember that the only way of compassing this is by having the whole of the arts and sciences translated into their own language. I would like to have written in gigantic letters on the Himalayas for the remembrance of future generations.”

Soon after his return to India in 1870, Syed Ahmed Khan began to think out the details of a scheme for founding a residential college on the lines of Oxford and Cambridge, where the learning of East and West might be combined without prejudice to religion.

The Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College Fund Committee was started in 1872, and four years later, Syed Ahmed Khan retired from Government service in order to devote his entire energies to the task. The foundation stone of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental
College at Aligarh was laid in the following January by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton. The Aligarh College soon attracted students from all over India. Syed Ahmed Khan was fortunate to secure the services of such Englishmen as Theodore Beck, Morison, and Sir Thomas Arnold; they freely mixed with their pupils and infected them with their own love of learning. Among the Indian scholars who made Aligarh their home, Hali, the Urdu poet; Shibli and Nazir Ahmed; carried on Syed Ahmed’s work after he died.

Syed Ahmed’s aims went far beyond the Aligarh College. He started an annual Mohammadan Educational Conference and hundreds of Muslims attended in order to hear lectures on educational subjects. It led to the foundation of number of schools in different parts of the country. He was a master of Urdu prose, and edited a monthly periodical, *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* which dealt with questions of Social Reform in an uncompromising manner, “I must say what is in my heart”, he declared, “even at the risk of being distasteful”. But the work brought a storm of opposition was his Tafsir, or commentary on the Quran. Syed Ahmed wished to show that there was no opposition between the teaching of Islam and modern science, and his views on the subject were frankly rationalistic. He maintained that the Quran was not verbally inspired, but must be interpreted with the light of reason. The Ulema or Mohammadan theologians branded him as a Kafir or Infidel, and went to the length of obtaining a *fatwa* or religious edict against him from Mecca; his life was more than once in danger from the daggers of fanatics. But he went on calmly with his work, undeterred by praise or blame.

Syed Ahmed Khan served on the Legislative Council in the time of Lord Lytton, and again under Lord Ripon. He was a member of the Educational and the Public Service Commissions. When the Indian National Congress was formed, with his usual frankness, he would have nothing to do with it. This was not because he was a separatist, for no one was keener than he to see India a nation. The terms Hindu and Mohammadan were, he said, religious and not political terms. He even compared the two communities to the two eyes in a human body, both equally indispensable. Hindu students were admitted freely to Aligarh. But he thought that politics in a largely illiterate country would divert attention from the real need, which was education. For the same reason he opposed Lord Ripon’s scheme for Local Self-Government.

In 1887, Syed Ahmed Khan was made K. C. S. I., and he devoted the remainder of his life to the cause he loved. The storms which attended the earlier part of his career had blown over, and wherever he went, his commanding figure, his long, snow-white beard, and his eloquent voice drew admiring crowds. No one was more loved and revered in Northern India. He died, full of years and honour, in 1898, and was laid to rest in a corner of the mosque of his beloved college. A fund raised to his memory in all parts of the country converted Aligarh into a University. It could not have been spent more fittingly. Perhaps his best epitaph is found in some lines written in his honour by the poet Hali.

To be ill treated by one’s brethren, but to live for their good.
To love the arrow by which one is pierced;
To live with but one hope to service one’s nation
And to die with that hope in one’s heart:
If you fulfil this ideal,
You can aspire to be Syed Ahmed.
AMU: An oasis for high learning: U.P. Governor

Sir Syed’s intent on modern education went a long way in shaping the destiny of modern secular India and his relentless efforts for spreading the knowledge of English and science and technology has made AMU an oasis of high learning in Uttar Pradesh where education has not taken firm roots”, said Mr. T.V. Rajeswar, Governor of Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing the Sir Syed Day celebrations at AMU on October 17, 2008, Uttar Pradesh Governor Mr. T.V. Rajeswar said that Sir Syed’s book “The Causes of Indian Revolt” has established his credentials as a visionary thinker. He realized that the knowledge of science and scientific temperament were essential for the Muslims to progress. He wanted MAO College to act as bridge between the East and the West. Sir Syed was not oblivious of the values of oriental learning and wanted to preserve and transmit it to posterity.

AMU Vice Chancellor Professor P.K. Abdul Azis said that Sir Syed strove for removing the cobwebs of ignorance. He said that Sir Syed wanted all Indians to join hands in removing illiteracy. Paying rich tributes to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor stressed the need of strengthening the legacy of Sir Syed’s large hearted tolerance and unflinching commitment to secularism as his cherished ideals.

AMU Vice Chancellor Professor P.K. Abdul Azis has said that the present administration of the University stood committed to make AMU an internationally sought after academic institution. In order to spread the message of Sir Syed the University has instituted international Sir Syed Award for literature. Eminent Pakistani writer Zakir Ali Khan got the first Sir Syed Award. The Chancellor of AMU, Justice A. M. Ahmadi presented the award to him carrying a cash prize of Rs. 5,00,000 and Citation.

Zakir Ali Khan expressed his gratitude for the award and he donated the whole prize money to the welfare of AMU students. He asked the students to imbibe the spirit of Aligarh which stipulates to rise to the occasion despite all odds.

Former Chief Justice of India, Justice A.M. Ahmadi, the Chancellor of AMU said that secularism is the ethos of our country and Sir Syed was an enemy of narrow mindedness.

Prof. Hameeda Ahmad and Prof. A.A. Nizami, Ms. Maria Salman, student of M.Sc. (Biochemistry) and Mr. Abdul Haleem Kidwai, student of B.A. (Economics) also spoke on the occasion.
Pro-chancellor Mr. Rahmatullah Khan Shervani distributed the prizes of All India Sir Syed Essay Writing Competition. Prof. Abu Qamar Siddiqui, DSW proposed the vote of thanks.

On this occasion Governor of Uttar Pradesh Mr. T.V. Rajeswar inaugurated the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Hall of residence for boys. He also paid floral tribute at the founder’s tomb.

Earlier, AMU Vice Chancellor, Prof. P.K. Abdul Azis inaugurated a book exhibition at Sir Syed Academy. He also released a book ‘Hayat-e-Javed’ translated into English by Prof. R.A. Alvi.

Call for creative ventures in Education

Vice President of India, Mr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari today urged the Muslim community to “emulate and adapt the initiatives taken by other communities in creative ventures in the field of education independent of Government agencies.”

Inaugurating the first World Summit of AMU Alumni at Aligarh Muslim University, Mr. Hamid Ansari, an alumnus of AMU, regretted that “we did not appreciate the need for organized philanthropy for public purposes.”

Stressing the need for female literacy he made a strong plea for launching a campaign for female education as it is a must for educating new generation.

Mr. Hamid Ansari urged the Aligarians to introspect and to do some cost accountancy on the occasion. Sir Syed’s message to bring the fruits of modern education to the Muslims of India succeeded to a point but the educational advancement succumbed to selectivity. As a result literacy level remains below the national level and only sections of the well-to-do were exposed to modern and higher education.

He urged the AMU students to adopt a proactive mode to withstand the challenges of knowledge society. Mr. Hamid Ansari urged AMU old boys to adopt innovative thinking rather than nostalgia as it is the need of the hour. Appreciating the concept of setting up a corpus fund of 100 Crores for reequipping the laboratories, opening new courses, upgradation of facilities and construction of new hostels, Mr. Hamid Ansari said that the proposed “AMU Endowment Fund” will usher in a new era of academic rejuvenation.

Uttar Pradesh Governor, Mr. T.V. Rajeswar has announced a contribution of Rs. One Lakh to AMU Alumni Fund from Governor’s discretionary fund. He also paid rich tributes to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Jharkhand Governor Mr. Sayyid Sibtey Razi said that the emerging knowledge based society has thrown open new challenges. He urged AMU to put emphasis on e-education and e-literacy.

AMU Vice Chancellor Professor P. K. Abdul Azis who conceived the idea of World Summit of AMU Alumni said that the Summit is braced for repositioning the role of AMU in the contemporary globalized world. He declared that AMU will celebrate a decade long Centenary programme of academic rejuvenation with the support of AMU Alumni.
AMU will celebrate its first centenary in 2020. It was converted into a central university in 1920.

AMU Chancellor Justice A.M. Ahmadi released the Souvenir of the Summit and presented its first copy to Professor Emeritus Irfan Habib. UP Minister Mr. Jaiveer Singh, Mr. Kaukab Hameed, Mr. Masood Akhtar (KSA) and Dr. Musarrat Ali also spoke on the occasion. University Registrar, Prof. V K Abdul Jaleel conducted the inaugural function and Professor Javed Akhtar, Organizing Secretary proposed the Vote of Thanks.

Address of the Hon’ble Vice President Shri M.Hamid Ansari at the inauguration of the world Summit of Aligarh Muslim University Alumni at Aligarh Muslim University on 18th October 2008 at 1000 hours

This is home coming and therefore in no need of ceremony. Today however is a special occasion and I am grateful to the University for having invited me to it.

Yesterday Aligarians the world over celebrated Sir Syed Day and finished the evening by devouring little or not so little quantities of biryani and shahi tukra. It was the occasion to honour the memory of the Founder of this great institution. The tendency of the practice is indeed admirable:

\[\text{Jahan jaa ain wahan tera fasana chheirh daite hain}\\ \text{Koi mehfil ho tera rang-e-mehfil yaad aata hai.}\]

Many of the success stories of recent decades are here with us today. For this reason, and no the morrow of Sir Syed Day, It is time to recall the message of Syed Ahmad Khan, do some introspection, some cost accountancy.

This institution came into existence in 1875 in response to a specific need, and on the basis of a vision. Its mission was to bring the fruits of modern education to the Muslims of India. This included inculcating a spirit of rational thinking and scientific enquiry. Allama Iqbal summed up the requirement in a couplet:

\[\text{Is daur main taleem hai amraz-e-millat ki dawa}\\ \text{Hai khoon-e-fasid ke liye taleem misl-e-naishtar}\]

The mission succeeded to a point, but failed to go beyond it. The results of that failure are evident and in no need of elaboration.
Two questions do rise: Why did it happen? How can it be corrected?

Let us candidly admit that our failure was conceptual as well as practical. We failed to appreciate that educational advancement cannot be sectional, nor can it be attained in a vacuum divorced from social change and without changes in levels of consciousness about evolving requirements of the world around us, nationally and internationally.

**Let me be specific**

- We succumbed to selectivity, and did not appreciate the true worth and imperative necessity of education for all, beginning with primary education. As a result illiteracy levels remain above the national level and, until quite recently, only sections of the well-to-do were exposed to modern and higher education.
- There was an inordinate delay in appreciating the need for female literacy and its relevance for education new generations.
- While Shikwa about our condition was valid, there was no need to carry it to the point of incapacity for autonomous action. We failed to take note of, emulate and adapt, the initiatives taken by other communities in creative ventures in the field of education independent of government agencies.
- While adhering about traditional virtue of charity, we did not (exceptions apart) appreciate the need for organized philanthropy for public purposes.

All this happened while the pace of change in modern India gathered a new momentum. To participate in this exciting venture, relevant education became a pre-requisite.

**Friends**

Much is happening nationally in the field of education. The requirement of a knowledge society, however, is yet to be met. Our Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education remains at 11 percent and compares poorly with China’s 22 percent and 54.6 percent of the developed world. The Government proposes to raise it to 15 percent by 2012 and 21 percent by 2017.

The challenge now before us is to ensure that all segment of the public benefit from it in equitable measure. This can only be achieved in a proactive mode, on the basis of an agenda relevant to the world of tomorrow.

We also need to understand that failure to participate would lead to marginalisation, and that mediocrity means irrelevance.

**II**

Every challenge is also an opportunity. What can and should be done by the Aligarh fraternity at this juncture? Could it become a catalyst? If so, what practical steps beckon us?

The corrective has to commence at the foundations of the societal structure. I would suggest that we lay the foundations of a new approach through the following eight steps:

- Ensure that in our own respective localities every child actually goes to primary school.
- Ensure that all children, boys and girls, complete eight years of schooling.
- Ensure that after class 8, children either proceed to class 10 or go to a vocational training centre.
Identify and assist those qualified to enter universities or professional institutions. Inculcate in them a spirit of competition. Affirmation of identity is a legitimate pursuit; seeking special dispensations will not get us very far.

Draw the maximum benefit from the scholarship schemes announced by the Government in recent months.

Mobilise opinion for channeling income from Awkaf for setting up new educational and professional institutions. This has been done in some places and the practice needs to be universalized.

Endeavour to go beyond charity to organized and focused philanthropy so that adequate resources are mobilized for medium and large scale interventions in the educational sector.

Seek equity, not concessions from the State and draw practical lessons from success stories of others, including our own elsewhere.

This wider setting is relevant to the Alumni’s understandable concern for the institution so dear to us.

For many of us, however, this not the university in which we spent our youth. We live in fast changing times. The AMU of yesteryears had lesser numbers, greater space, fewer pressures. On each count today, the situation has worsened. This has impacted adversely on the output in diverse ways and has become a matter of concern. Innovative thinking than nostalgia, is the call of the hour.

Funding by the Government takes care of salaries, pensions and normal expenses of the University. This is substantial but leaves insufficient amounts for developmental purposes – for re-equipping of laboratories, opening of new courses, up-gradation of facilities, construction of new hostels etc. alumni support in some other universities in the country has ameliorated these in good measure and there is no reason why AMU Alumni cannot do likewise.

Infrastructure is one aspect of a new agenda. More important is the quality of the intake and the crafting and content of courses. AMU needs to respond to the challenges of the 21st century, of knowledge society and of a globalizing world. Some of what is taught, and the way it is taught, has become irrelevant. Reorientation of courses of study and of the methodology of teaching has become a necessity.

At the same time, the hallmark of a good university remains the quality of research undertaken by its scholars. To further the frontiers of knowledge, it must retain balance between theoretical and applied research.

A report produced by the university recently, aimed at raising the potential in teaching and research, has identified problems pertaining to accountability, teaching performance and research output. These need to be rectified expeditiously.

III

Within the ambit of a university, the specific requirements of higher education, professional education and distant education have to be met. None can be neglected. In the final analysis, a university has to be responsive as well as responsible; responsive to societal demands and responsible to its role of guiding reflection and policy-making in a
society. At imbalance between the two would be detrimental to the institution and a loss to the society.

I wish this conclave success in its deliberations. It should go beyond nashistand, guftand, barkhastand and come forth with practical suggestions on what the Alumni can do to help the AMU reorient itself. Only then would it be said with conviction:

“Kuch ho raha hai ishq o hawas main bhi imtiaz
Aaya hai ab mizaj tera imtehan per”.

Alumni donate 2.5 crores to the University

The Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Mr. M. A. A. Fatmi said that the Ministry of Human Resource Development has accepted the proposal of the University to open five Centres of AMU with a cost of Rs. 2000 Crores. The Ministry has now advised the University to prepare a detailed Project Report as required by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Fatmi was addressing World Summit of AMU Alumni. He said that the proposed Centres will replicate the AMU model and would be the richest tribute the nation can pay to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for the outstanding services he has rendered for spreading education among Indians. Mr. Fatmi is an alumnus of the Aligarh Muslim University and did his M. Sc. Engineering. He was also Honorary Secretary of the AMU Students’ Union.

Mr. Fatmi was the first alumnus who presented a cheque of Rs. One Lakh to his alma mater for the new “Endowment Fund” of the University.

The Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, Prof. P. K. Abdul Azis delivered keynote address at a symposium on the Role of Alumni to create a new future for AMU:

‘Vision 2020’

He said that AMU Alumni Summit is a humble initiative to capture the nostalgic memories of a colourful bygone era. The purpose of this Summit is to re-invigorate the bondage of the alumni with their alma mater and enable them to participate in its modernization, expansion, growth and glory.

In his keynote address, Prof. Azis mentioned that AMU will be celebrating centenary of its becoming a University in 2020 and the University has to redefine its goals and create a blue print for its modernization and expansion. The University needs to be repositioned in tune with the technology driven fast changing global transformation that touches all realms of activity. We have to recapture the vibrant spirit of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and march forward in a relentless manner, to be partners in the creation of a new India of our dream.
A Saudi based Engineer Mr. Nadeem Tarin in his presentation said that the knowledge economy will be the main yardstick to measuring success of a nation and wished that the AMU contributes in a big way to make India a highly knowledge efficient nation by producing a knowledge efficient workforce. Assuring all help on behalf of the Old Boys’ Association of Riyadh, he has announced Rupees Ten Million to the fund.

Further, he urged the AMU old boys to establish at least two hundred scholarships by contributing a reasonable funding for Engineering College.

Noted Scientist Dr. Shahid Jameel has proposed to start a Best Teacher Award for each faculty and the awardee should be honored at a University forum.

The World Summit of AMU Alumni was inaugurated on October 18, 2008 by Vice President of India, Mr. M. Hamid Ansardi, Governor of UP Mr. T. V. Rajeswar and Governor of Jharkhand Mr. Syed Sibtay Razi were the guests of honor.

AMU Alumni from twenty countries and 19 Indian states attended this two-day historic event which was truly global.

On this occasion prominent alumni have donated Rs. 2.5 crores to the University corpus. Mr. Ameer Ahmad, Group Managing Director of Teejan Group of Companies, Oman donated Rs. One Crore, Er. Nadeem Tarin announced a donation of Rs. One Crore on behalf of the AMU Alumni Association, Riyadh. Dr. Athar R. Khan and Mr. Yusuf Ali Khan donated Rs. Ten Lakh each, Mrs. Arjumand Bano, Mrs. Maryam Khan, Mr. Shahnawaz Tarin and Mrs. Shahnawaz Tarin donated Rs. 5 lakh each and Prof. Abad Ahmad, Mr. Fazal Khan, USA, donated Rs. One lakh and Mr. Syed Zafar Mehmood donated Rs. Ten Thousand per annum and 530 sq. yard land to his alma mater. The Imam of Jama Masjid of Kerala donated Rs. Ten Thousand per annum.

Prof. M. Saleemuddin, Vice Chairman of the Organizing Committee of World Summit of AMU Alumni has proposed the Aligarh Muslim University Endowment Fund to receive donations from its alumni, individuals, philanthropic organizations and well wishers of the University.

He said this fund will be utilized for various academic research and development project including computing facility in Halls of residence and Departments of Studies. This fund would also provide international travel to students and teachers for joining short term training/orientation programmes in universities of repute and creation of new Centres and laboratories for research.

Dr. Masood Akhtar of Wisconsin University, Madison (USA) suggested that AMU should contact Centres of International repute and sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the prestigious universities across the globe.

Noted historian Professor Irfan Habib said that the University should provide equal facilities to girl students. He said that female enrolment in this University is increasing every year and now University has forty percent female students at its rolls.
Sir Syed Laureate Zakir Ali Khan Felicitated

To felicitate eminent laureates and social workers of Pakistan Mr. Mohammad Zakir Ali Khan on receiving the prestigious Sir Syed Ahmad Khan International Award for literature 2008, a programme was hosted by the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University at the Vice Chancellor’s Lodge. Pro-Chancellor Nawab Rahmatullah Khan Sherwani presided over the felicitation programme.

Vice Chancellor Prof. P. K. Abdul Azis said that Mr. Zakir Ali Khan’s life is exemplary to all the Aligarians spread all over the world. He said that Mr. Zakir Ali Khan has played an important role in spreading Sir Syed’s message by contributing the most in the establishment of the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi, Pakistan. Mr. Zakir Ali Khan has proved that how the mission of Sir Syed can be accomplished. The fact is that Mr. Zakir Ali Khan has promoted Sir Syed’s mission with the missionary’s spirit.

“Mr. Zakir Ali Khan has been performing as the Secretary of AMU Old Boys’ Association, Karachi for last 50 years and this shows the honor and respect he enjoys from other fellow Aligarians,” Prof. Azis said. He emphasized that Aligarians from all over the world should strive for the establishment of new institutions in their areas to fulfill Sir Syed’s dreams of propagating education and literacy among Muslims.

Prof. Azis stated that AMU Court had decided to constitute an international award after the University’s founder Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. AMU Executive Council has also approved the said decision of AMU Court. Prof. Azis said that he feels proud that the first International Sir Syed Award for Literature 2008 has gone to an Aligarian.

Presiding over the felicitation programme Nawab Rahmatullah Khan Sherwani said that Mr. Zakir Ali Khan has done a great and exemplary job by establishing the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Pakistan in his own life time that shows the path that every Aligarians should work for his community in his own way.

Mr. Zakir Ali Khan, expressing his sentiments, said that he has already completed 80 years of his life and whatever he has earned, he owes to this great seat of learning. He said that this Award is for all the Aligarians in Pakistan who have adopted the mission of Sir Syed practically in their lives. “I am proud of being an Aligarian as this institution has not only equipped me with the education but also with the ability to move forward”, he said. Mr. Zakir Ali Khan expressed gratitude to Prof. P. K. Abdul Azis for his help in getting him visa and emphasized on the need of promoting sports in University campus and establishing contact with other universities of India.

Praising the work of Mr. Zakir Ali Khan, Nawab Ibne Saeed of Chhatari said that he has been aware of his work for a long time and he has made Sir Syed immortal in Pakistan by establishing the Sir Syed University at Karachi.
Sir Syed Day
At a Glance
Sir Syed Day
At A GLANCE
Alumni
At A GLANCE
Alumni
At A GLANCE
Dean Faculty of Engineering, Prof. Ahtisham A. Nizami said that AMU prepares its students to withstand all the adversities and become successful in practical life. He said that such a motto cannot be achieved merely with the help of money, rather it needs to put one’s whole life at stake. He suggested that Mr. Zakir Ali Khan’s book “Riwayat-e-Aligarh” be translated into Hindi so that the new generation can get ample knowledge of Aligarh values and traditions.

The Registrar of Aligarh Muslim University, Prof. V. K. Abdul Jalil, welcoming honorable guests, said that it is really a day to celebrate because we are welcoming one who has dedicated all his life to the cause of Aligarh. He said that Mr. Zakir Ali Khan is rightly considered second Sir Syed in Pakistan.

University’s Public Relations’ Officer Dr. Rahat Abrar presented a Photo Album to Mr. Zakir Ali Khan and Nodal Officer Prof. N. A. K. Durrani proposed the vote of thanks.

Vice Chancellor presented a memorabilia to Mr. Zakir Ali Khan on this occasion.

Exhibition of Books and Journal on Sir Syed

On the occasion of Sir Syed Day and World Summit of AMU Alumni 2008, a grand exhibition of books and journals by/on Sir Syed Ahmad was inaugurated on 16th October, 2008 in the Library of the Institute of Islamic Studies (AMU, Aligarh) by Prof. Shan Muhammad, an authority on Sir Syed studies and Director, Sir Syed Academy, AMU. Most of the important books and treatises of Sir Syed and hundreds of Urdu, English, Arabic and Persian works about Sir Sayyed and several special issues of reputed journals on him were on display in this exhibition. The rarities of the exhibition included the 1st edition of Khutabat-i- Ahmadiah and its English version published in 1870 and 1887 respectively. Speaking on this occasion, Prof. Shan Muhammad observed that for the first time an exhibition on Sir Syed was organized in the Library of the Institute of Islamic Studies by the present Chairman of the Department Prof. Zafarul Islam which brought out the rich collection of the Library about Sir Syed before scholars, researchers, students and Old Boys of AMU. The learned speaker also emphasized that the Library of the Institute certainly deserves all kinds of help and support from the University administration for its maintenance and further development.

Talking about the exhibition, Prof. Zafarul Islam pointed out that it was humble attempt of the Department/Institute of Islamic Studies to highlight the rich collection of the Library about Sir Syed. He also appreciated the sincere effort and hard work of Mr. Kabir Ahmad Khan (Assistant Librarian) and his staff of the Library for maintenance of the Library and making this Exhibition attractive and impressive.
The inaugural function of the exhibition was attended by the staff members, research scholars and students of Islamic Studies, Arabic and other departments. Prof: Muhammad Salahuddin Umari, Chairman, Dept. of Arabic, Prof. Muhammad Rafique, former Dean, Faculty of Arts, Prof. Muhammad Yasin Mazhar Siddiqi & Prof. Abdul Ali, former Directors of the Institute of Islamic Studies and Prof. Jawed Ali, Chairman, Department of Physical Health & Sports Education also graced the occasion.

The foreign delegates of the World Summit of AMU Alumni who visited the Exhibition and appreciated the rich collection of the Library on Sir Syed included Janab Shahid Jamal Khan (Kuwait), Janab Abdullah (Chairman of the Federation of Aligarh Alumni Associations of North America, Washington DC) and Mr. Ahtasham Rizvi (Canada).

**Women’s College Plays Host to its Illustrious Alumni**

As part of World Summit of AMU, Alumni 2008 Women’s College organized an Interactive Session with its successful alumni. Begum Salma Ansari renowned social worker, wife of Hon’ble Vice-President Hamid Ansari was the Chief Guest with Dr. Afshan Hashmi and Mrs. Asma Khan (entrepreneurs) as panel members for the Interactive Session.

The Principal, Women’s College, Prof. (Mrs.) Bilquis N. Waris welcomed the guests and presented them mementos to mark the special occasion. In the interactive session, students participated enthusiastically asking questions on diverse subjects of social work, NGOs, future of women, political situation and entrepreneurship. The interactive session was followed by a cultural programme consisting of two English plays (a dramatic presentation of the Highway Man and A Scene from My Fair Lady) and ghazal recitation.
Book Review

(The Gazette intends to publish book review column regularly. Professor Shan Mohammad is a renowned scholar of Sir Syed Studies and Dr. Aftab Alam objectively reviews his recent book-Editor)


Sir Syed Ahmad khan, the founder of this great seat of learning, was the most misunderstood man of the modern Indian history despite the fact that of all the Muslim thinkers produced by this sub-continent in the last two centuries, he was undoubtedly the most rational in his approach and ideas. He was grossly misread not only during his life time but even after his death by both his admirers and critics. His views on religion, politics and education even today triggers strong reactions. He is dubbed as ’a Prophet of Muslim Nationalism’, ‘a harbinger of the Great Divide’, ‘a father of two nation theory’, ‘a separatist’. Rajmohan Gandhi writes that Sir Syed ‘…is hailed, and assailed as the founder of Muslim separatism…he is blamed and praised, as a modernizer of Islam.’

In the book under review the author Prof Shan Muhammad, not only systematically refutes most of these allegations but also introduces us Sir Syed’s views on numerous other issues such as his on village, agriculture, and economy which have so far not been given much space in academic discussion. The author defends each step undertaken by Sir Syed. Prof Muhammad states that Sir Syed was a prolific writer, affluent speaker and he wrote and spoke on almost every issue affecting his country and his people. He was a Urdu prose writer of par excellence. He introduced new style in Urdu writing. He has written in ‘penetrating fashion…to awaken his people from slumber.’ Unfortunately Sir Syed has been very much misquoted or quoted out of context.

Sir Syed’s vision for his country and his countrymen was very great, writes Prof. Muhammad in the preface of the book. Sir Syed always admired that his country had been a cradle of education, civilization, and culture. He visited different parts of his country and felt that it was in no way inferior to Europe. He had full praise for Indian cities, its people and architecture.

‘The Revolt of 1857 was a turning point in Sir Syed’s life’ writes Prof Muhammad while discussing his views on the first war of independence. Greatly disturbed with the British victimization of Indians during and after the revolt and accusation of Muslim conspiracy behind it, Sir Syed decided to present a true picture of the event. He thoroughly examined the mutiny and concluded that it was the British Govt. and its policies that were solely responsible for the catastrophe called mutiny. According to Sir Syed the main cause of the outbreak of 1857 was the non-admission of the Indians in the Legislative Council. He pointed out that for the stability and prosperity of the government, it was essential that the people’s voice are heard, but the British Government ‘never knew what troubles each succeeding sun might bring with it subjects, or what sorrow might fall upon them with the night’. (p.15). Sir Syed was perhaps the first Indian who despite his pro-British stances raised his voice for allowing a role to the Indians in the affairs of the country.

Sir Syed lived in an age which was once a chaotic and creative phase of Indian history. He had witnessed the fall of the last remnants of what once was the mighty
Mughal empire, and had seen the precipitation of the colonization of India. After 1857 he emerged as an important exponent of Muslim trade to enable India to better its economy.

The most complex and controversial issue of Hindu-Muslim relations and the views of Sir Syed on that form the content of chapter 7. The author points out that for Sir Syed the question of being Muslim or Hindu was a matter of a person’s internal faith which had nothing to do with external things and mutual relations. The simple argument Sir Syed put forwarded was that Hindus and Muslims both came from outside and settled down here with the only difference that Hindus came much earlier to Muslims. Thus in Sir Syed’s view India became the country of both. It is worth quoting Sir Syed who said “both take water from the holy Ganga and Jamuna and live on the products of India…in life and death they are together…their blood and colour have become the same and their faces similar.’ Sir Syed insisted that ‘the national development and progress of both (Hindus and Muslims) is possible by our mutual love and sympathy.’ In his view ‘mutual conflict will destroy both.’

Sir Syed’s opposition of the Indian National Congress must be viewed in the background that his main concern was modern education for Muslims minus politics. The mutiny of 1857 had horrified him as he was witness to the suffering and devastation of Indians of northern India specially the Muslims and thus he did not want those awful days to shadow them again. In his defence of Sir Syed’s opposition of politics the author, though not very convincing, cites his oft repeated words that unless his countrymen got maturity in political matters, it was childish to talk of it. The author has however, not suggested how the political maturity will be achieved without political participation.

The last chapter of the book provides a general assessment of Sir Syed’s views and categorically refutes all the charges leveled against Sir Syed. He reiterates that Sir Syed’s decision to oppose the National Congress was taken with all sincerity and was not a communal decision or separatist one. He says that secularism was Sir Syed’s motto throughout his life. To Sir Syed the creation of a harmonious milieu was essential for India’s development. According to Prof Muhammad Sir Syed was the first among the Indian Muslims who revolutionized their whole system of life, their thought, education and social practices. Sir Syed always advocated that if Muslims wished for a bright future entire Madrassa education system be overhauled. In his view the future of Indian Muslims lay in modern education. The author has emphasized that Sir Syed’s thinking was in right direction.

The author of this book Prof Shan Muhammad must be congratulated for bringing out yet another scholarly work on Sir Syed and presenting him in an objective manner. The author has made scholarly attempt to remove the various misconceptions woven around Sir Syed. The book deserves to be read by all those who wish to understand the nature and dynamic of modern Indian history and the place of Muslims therein.

**Submission Guidelines and Policy**  
*Aligarh Muslim University Gazette* publishes articles, news and information about AMU. Contributions are published on a space-available basis. Matter not run in a particular issue will be retained for later use. Articles on subjects that interest an academic readership may be contributed in about 1500 words. Contributions are edited to suit in-house style.

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