

**45th Annual Conference on South Asia
Center for South Asian Studies
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin, October 20-23, 2016**

***South Asian Muslim Studies Association
2016 Pre-Conference***

Thursday, October 20, 2016

***“Modernity and Tradition
in South Asian Muslim Thought:
Contemporary and Historical Perspectives
on the Modernist Legacy of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan”***

**The Madison Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club
1 West Dayton Street
Madison, WI 53703
www.concoursehotel.com
1-800 356-8293**

South Asian Muslim Studies Association (SAMSA)

southasianmuslimstudiesassociation.org

SAMSA Third Annual Pre-Conference

The Co-Chairs of this SAMSA Pre-Conference, Roger D. Long, M. Raisur Rahman, and Sanaa Riaz and the Program Committee, which is made up of the Executive Officers and Board Members of SAMSA, invite you to this SAMSA Third Annual Pre-Conference. The South Asian Muslim Studies Association was founded in 1974 at Villanova University by political scientist Professor Hafeez Malik (b. 1930) to promote research on Muslims of the Indian sub-continent. In 2014 the first SAMSA pre-conference offered an assessment of research on South Asian Muslim studies over the previous forty years. SAMSA, since its inception, has sponsored hundreds of scholars, without reference to seniority, gender, religious affiliation, or national origin, in panels covering topics dealing with any area of research pertaining to Muslims and Muslim life in any of the countries of South Asia, as well as Muslims in the South Asian diaspora. This third annual pre-conference continues that tradition. In commemoration of its fortieth year, the theme of the Pre-Conference in 2014 was “Forty Years of South Asian Muslim Studies”. The theme of the 2015 Pre-Conference was “Interactions: National and Transnational Themes in South Asian Muslim Studies.” This conference, “Modernity and Tradition in South Asian Muslim Thought: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on the Modernist Legacy of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan,” is dedicated to the ideas of Sir Syed Ahmed (1817-1898) in celebration of the forthcoming bi-centennial commemoration of his birth and the publication of a volume dedicated to his life and work to be edited by Irfan A. Omar and Yasmin Saikia. SAMSA is grateful to them for drawing up the plans for this pre-conference and for making the life and contribution of Sir Syed the theme of this pre-conference.

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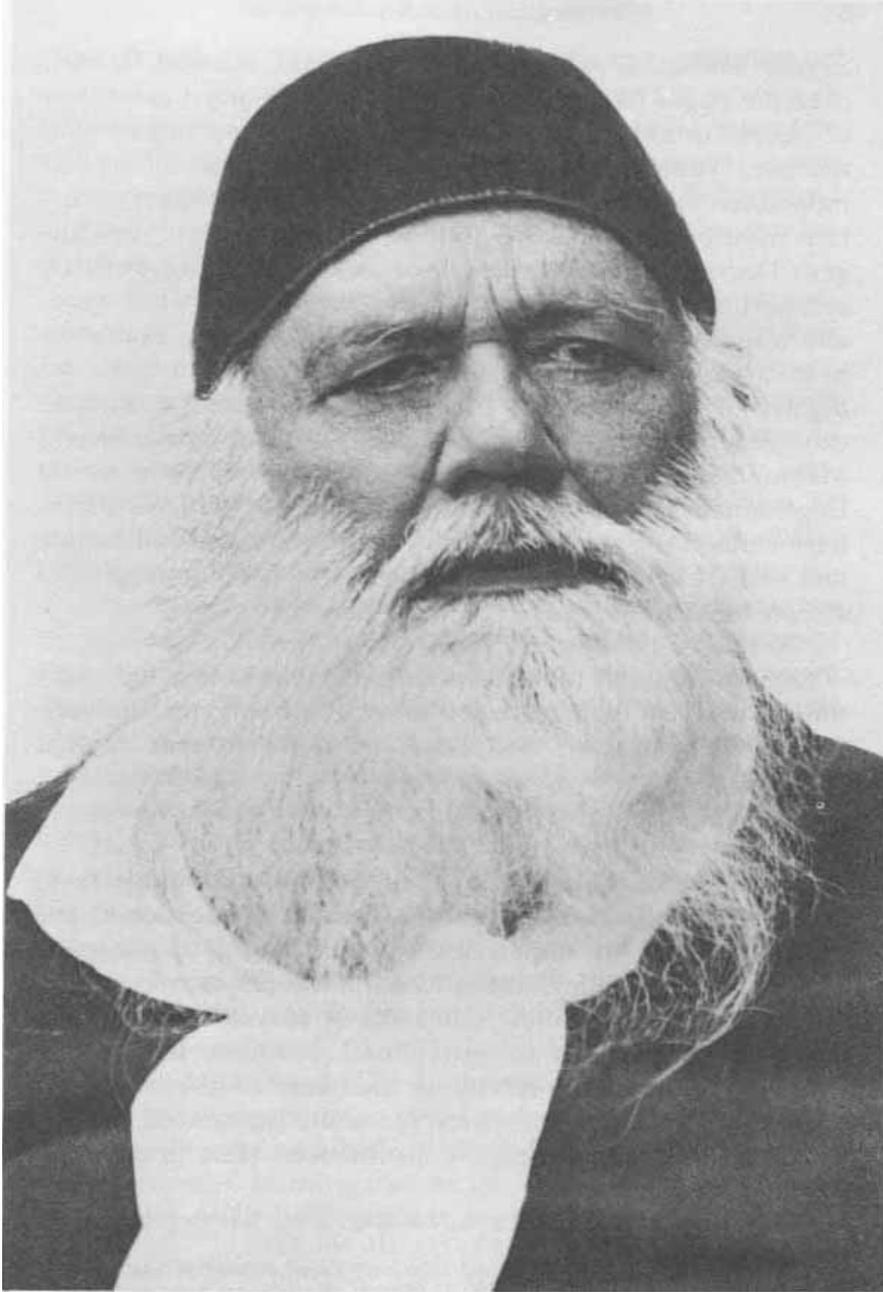
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Sir Syed Ahmed Khan



Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898)

Syed Ahmed Khan has been called a “multidimensional personality, a creative thinker, a philosophical theologian, a community leader, an educationalist and a liberal modernist.” He was all these things and more. He was an intellectual, a man of letters, a powerful and inspiring orator, and an inspiration to his community whose name and legacy live on two centuries after his birth. Popularly known as Sir Syed, was born in Delhi on October 17, 1817 to a Husaini Syed family who had migrated to India from Herat during the reign of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar (1542-1605, Emperor 1556-1605). In 1754 his paternal grandfather, Syed Hadi, was awarded a *mansab* (honorary rank) and an honorary name, Jawwad Ali Khan, at the court of the 16th Mughal Emperor, Alamgir II (1699-1759, Emperor 1754-59). He also received a number of other offices and titles. They were conferred on his son, Syed Muttaqi, Sir Syed’s father, on his death. Bhai Muttaqi, as the Emperor called him, a man of spiritual and mystical leanings, died in 1838. Sir Syed’s maternal grandfather Khwaja Fariduddin Ahmad (1747-1828) was of Kashmiri origin and only briefly associated with the Mughal court. He was an envoy for the East India Company to Persia and Burma, a scholar, particularly of mathematics, and had an extensive library. He was employed by the Mughal Emperor, Akbar Shah II (1760-1837, Emperor 1806-37), and had deep religious leanings as well. His daughter, Aziz-un-Nisa, Sir Syed’s mother, was an educated woman who taught her son part of the Qu’ran and other subjects and was great influence on him. It was his mother and his paternal grandfather, and not his father, who were the most important figures in his early education and to whom Sir Syed owed most, for his early intellectual development. Sir Syed was, therefore, born into a family at the center of Mughal rule and Mughal culture in Delhi with a family that had some connections with Mughal administration; a family with scholarly interests, some experience in governing and government service, and spiritual leanings.

Syed Ahmed (he used the title Khan later in his life) was the younger of two brothers. His elder brother, with whom he was close was Syed Muhammad, was educated from a young age at home at his maternal grandfather’s house where he was one of a dozen boys of his extended family of a similar age. He was tutored in Persian and he learned Arabic. He also learned mathematics and developed an interest in science.

In 1836 his father died and the family was left with little financial support apart from a small allowance given to his widow and income from property from the maternal grandmother’s side of the family. Syed received work in the Mughal administration in the office of the *sadar amin* (civil judge) but in February 1839, and against family wishes, accepted the position of *naib munshi* (deputy civil judge) with the East India Company which was offered to him by a British official who had met Syed in Delhi. As a result, his work in the judicial branch of the East India Company began. He would work for the Company and then for the British administration for the

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (Cont'd)

next 38 years. The first of his several hundred pieces of writing appearing in 1840. It has been estimated that in the course of his life he penned over 6,000 pages of writing. On December 24, 1841 Syed was appointed *munsif* at Mainpuri (United Provinces) and then Fatepur Sikri where he penned a number of writings including a short essay on the life of the Prophet. He had achieved renown as a civil servant and on a holiday in Delhi in 1842 the Mughal court conferred on him the family titles of *Jawwad ad Daula* (Servant of Success) and *Arif Jung* (Spiritual Devotee). By the early 1840's he had begun his life as a man of letters and an intellectual eventually producing huge numbers of writings on a variety of subjects in history, archaeology, journalism, literature, and politics, and including and most importantly, around thirty pieces of writing on religion where he eventually developed his modernist interpretation of Islamic thought.

Syed's theological views went through three stages. The first was from 1842 until 1857 and is characterized by an orthodox approach when the touchstone was the *sunna* (example) of the Prophet and his Companions. His first religious study was the publication in 1842 of a biographical sketch of the Prophet Muhammad, *Jila al-qulub bi zikr al-mahbub* (Delight of the Hearts in Remembering the Beloved), which was a Sufi text. His second was a defense of the Sunni camp, *Tuhfa Hasan* (1844), and was aimed against the Shias. In his third treatise, *Kalimat al-haqq* (Sentence of Truth) (1849), he gave his views on *pirs* (heads of religious orders) and their discipleship. His fourth brochure was *Rah-i sunnat dar radd-i bid'at* (The Sunna and the Rejection of Innovations) and the fifth *Namiqa dar bayan-i mas'ala-i tasawwur-I shaikh* (Explanation of the *tasawwur-i shaikh*-doctrine) (Contemplating on the Master-doctrine) (1852). The last writing of this period was the translation of passages of al-Gazali's *Kimiya' al-Sa'adat* (The Alchemy of Happiness) (c. 1105) into Urdu.

The period 1857 to 1869 represented a period of transition when he produced one important work, the commentary on the Bible, *Tabyin al-kalam* (1862); it is from 1870 that Syed Ahmed Khan espoused his independent religious thought taking a rationalist approach to all matters religious. His commentary on the Qur'an, *Tafsir-al-Qur'an*, was the most significant but most controversial of his writings. It was published in sections over a fifteen-year period between 1876 and 1891 and met opposition from conservative *ulema* who condemned his attempt to present an interpretation of the Qur'an consistent with contemporary European science.

In February 1846 at his request he had been transferred to Delhi after the death of his brother so he could support his mother. Apart from two short assignments in 1850 and 1853 as *sadar amin* in Rohtak, he remained in Delhi until 1854, where he continued to produce a steady body of writing. To supplement his income he also turned to journalism as well as scholarly work,

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (Cont'd)

producing a renowned volume (although he had already published six other books) on the archaeology of Delhi, *Asar-al sanadid* (The Remnant Signs of Ancient Heroes), in 1847, although his attempt to make a paying proposition of a journal founded by his brother failed. At the same time he continued his religious studies with a number of clerics including a descendant of Shah Waliullah (1702-62) at the *Madrasah i-Rahimiya*.

He was promoted first class *munsif* in Delhi before accepting a transfer to Bijnor on January 13, 1855. As a result, he was in the United Province, the heart of the revolt during the Mutiny, also known as the Great Rebellion, or First War of Independence, which broke out on May 10, 1857, where he was serving as the civil judge at the court of Bijnor in the northwest part of the province close to the origin of the uprising at Meerut. He refused to join those fighting the British and left for Delhi to rescue his mother. He did so but she died at Meerut. He also lost several relatives to the violence. At Bijnor, at the risk of his life, he protected a number of Europeans who were in danger and in a confused situation resisted the invitation of the Nawab of Najibabad to join in the revolt. As a result, his house was occupied and his property plundered. The Nawab fled in the face of counter-attack and the British asked Syed to take charge and govern Bijnor. However, he had to flee Bijnor and with difficulty and in great danger reached Meerut. He penned an account of these events in *Tarikh-i sarkashi-i zila-i bijnor* (*History of the Bijnor Rebellion*) in 1858.

In 1858 he was appointed to serve in Moradabad just over one-hundred miles north of Delhi. As soon as he arrived in his new posting he began to write the pamphlet, *Asbaab-i baghawat-i hind* ("The Causes of the Indian Revolt," with the original and a translation found on Francis Pritchett's website at www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett and an English translation published in the "Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints" in 2000, with an introduction by historian Francis Robinson.). Syed printed up 500 copies of his pamphlet and sent one copy to the government, kept a number for himself, and sent the rest to England. It was to become one of his most famous pieces of writing. It was to epitomize what Syed stood for: the defense of the Muslim community. This was to mean the defense of Islam, the promotion of Urdu, and the social reform and the educational advance of Muslims. He argued that the Rebellion occurred for a number of reasons; it had no foreign involvement, the annexation of Oudh was not the cause of the general uprising, and nor was the Bengal Army. Above all, he went on at length to argue that Muslims were not the cause of the revolt. He gave five reasons for the outbreak: 1) ignorance and misinterpretation on the part the people of India on what the British government was doing; 2) governing and passing laws that contravened Indian customs; 3) ignorance on the part of the

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (Cont'd)

government of Indian conditions and what Indians were thinking; 4) poor governing; and 5) bad management of and disaffection in the army. The pamphlet was only made available to the general public after it was translated into English in 1873 and, in spite of the fears of Syed's friends that it would cause him personal difficulties with government officials, even threaten his career, it was well received by most of them, if not all, as constructive criticism and his motives were not called into question.

It was in 1867 with the outbreak of the Urdu controversy that he emerged as a leader of the Muslim community of India. His influence not only came about through his enormous output of writings but because of his great oratorical ability when his voice could echo throughout the hall where he was speaking and where he could whip up audiences "to the wildest enthusiasm." His involvement in the Urdu controversy came about because of his opposition to the plan to introduce Hindi as the second language of the United Provinces. An advocate of the use of Urdu, he had formed a Translation Society which translated scientific works in English into Urdu and Hindi and this evolved in 1864 into the Scientific Society of Aligarh. It sought to promote a liberal modern education for Muslims that incorporated Western scientific knowledge. Two years later the Society erected its own building. It had a reading room and a library. Its weekly journal, *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, was started by Syed and he contributed a large number of articles running to the hundreds on a wide variety of topics including human evolution, plant and animal life, and the solar system. It was also in the *Gazette* that Syed reviewed and refuted the ideas of William Wilson Hunter's, *The Indian Mussalmans* (1871) which raised questions about the loyalty of Muslims and argued that the *jihad* of Sayyid Ahmed Bareilvi (1786-1831) in 1826 was anti-British, again demonstrating his concern to defend the Muslim community. The journal had sections in both English and Urdu. Syed perceived Urdu to be the *lingua franca* of Muslims in India and with the decline of Persian, the official language of the Mughal court, promoted Urdu in his writings and fought hard against the provincial government's plan to make Hindi the second language of the state. Urdu was the medium of instruction in the schools he had created and he believed that Urdu was the language of the gentry and Hindi, the language of the "vulgar." His followers created such organizations as the Urdu Defence Association (1900) and the Anjuman-i Taraqqi-i-Urdu (Council for the Advancement of Urdu) (1903) and Urdu became the official language of the state of Hyderabad and after its creation in 1918 the official language of Osmania University.

His educational activities, for which he is most famous and through which his legacy mostly endures, began when he established a *madrasa* in Moradabad in 1859. An important characteristic of the school was the teaching of Western science along with traditional religious subjects. In 1863, in Ghazipur in the far eastern part of the United Provinces, he established

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (Cont'd)

another *madrassa*, and purchased his own personal press. It was also in Ghazipur that on January 9, 1864 he founded the Scientific Society. In 1869 Syed spent eighteen months in Europe, mostly in London, on leave. In order to finance his trip, which left him in dire financial difficulties and which put him heavily in debt, he sold his library, mortgaged his house, and asked for and received a grant from the government. He left a vivid account of his impressions of his trip in his correspondence which was published in the newsletter of the Scientific Society, as *Safarnamah-i Musafir-i Landan* (Travelogue of the Voyage to London) (and translated into English in *A Voyage to Modernism: Syed Ahmed Khan*.) He travelled with his eldest son, Syed Hamid (1849-94), who was in the provincial service in the North-West Provinces, a cousin Khudadad Beg, a servant, Chajju, and his younger son, Syed Mahmood (1850-1903), who was one of nine people to receive a government scholarship to study in England. The cousin, Khudadad Beg, was from the maternal side of the family and he also received a government scholarship. Syed Mahmood was to enroll at Lincoln's Inn to study law and at the University of Cambridge (Syed's wife had died in 1861 when he was 44 years old leaving him to raise his two sons and a daughter.) Syed Mahmood was to end a distinguished career in the law as a judge of the Allahabad High Court (1892-93). In England Syed visited schools and universities and was received as an honorary member of the Athenaeum Club and a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society. On August 6 he received the Order of the Star of India from the Secretary of State for India, Lord Argyle (1823-1900, Secretary of State 1868-74) and would henceforth be entitled to call himself, "Bahadur" (lit. "Brave," the title derives from the Mongol term, "Baghatur") and to add the initials C.S.I. after his name. During his stay in London he was warmly received by a number of former officials from India including the former Viceroy, Lord Lawrence (1811-79, Viceroy 1864-69), who visited him often and invited him and his sons to the opening session of parliament in February 1870. Colonel G.F.I. Graham (b. 1840) who, along with his friend Sir Auckland Colvin (1838-1908) of the Indian Civil Service, had translated his *Asbab-i baghawat-i hind* into English, and was the first person to publish his biography (1885), also attended regularly on him. Syed was even invited to meet with Queen Victoria at a court appearance but he could not attend on the scheduled date. Apart from the severe financial straits he constantly faced during the trip and the money he had to borrow to meet his expenses he also received the "painful" news that his daughter, Amina, had died.

He returned to India the following year determined to establish a college for Muslims in India, "similar to that of Oxford or Cambridge": the campaign to create the college became known as the Aligarh Movement. In 1870 he established the "Committee for the Better Diffusion and Advancement of Learning among Muhammadans." Three years later the Committee proposed the construction of a college at Aligarh and on May 24, 1875 teaching commenced at the school level. The foundation stone of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College was laid by the

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (Cont'd)

Viceroy, Lord Lytton (1831-91, Viceroy 1876-80) on January 8, 1877 and college classes began in 1878. Sir Syed had retired as a jurist in July 1876.

In 1878 he was nominated to serve on the Viceroy's Legislative Council. For four years he served on the Education Commission. Fearful for the positions of Muslims in a Hindu-dominated political party he urged Muslims to refrain from participating in the activities of the Indian National Congress when it was founded in Bombay in December 1885. In 1866 he had created the Aligarh British Indian Association to establish contacts with the British parliament to further Muslim interests. In 1878 he founded the Muhammadan Association to promote political cooperation among Muslims on a national basis. In 1883 he organized the Muhammadan Civil Service Fund Association to support the entry of Muslims into the Indian Civil Service. In 1886 he inaugurated the All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference. It was at a meeting of the Conference on December 30, 1906 in Dhaka that a number of its delegates established the All-India Muslim League. In 1887 he was nominated to be a member of the Civil Service Commission and the following year he established the United Patriotic Association.

For all his activities he was knighted in 1888 and henceforth would become known as "Sir Syed." He also received an honorary doctorate in law from the University of Edinburgh. Sir Syed died on March 27, 1898 and his tomb graces the center of the campus, but through his college, since 1920 Aligarh Muslim University, his modernist philosophy and legacy endures. The Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology was founded in Karachi in 1995 and every year, on October 17, his birthday is celebrated around the world by Aligarh Muslim University *alumni* and their friends. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was one of the sub-continent's great intellectuals, man of letters, and reformers; for Francis Robinson, "the greatest Indian Muslim of the nineteenth century."

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Program

Conference Room 1

8:30	Welcome
8:30-10:15	Panel 1
10:15-10:30	Coffee Break: Foyer
10:30-12:15	Panel 2
12:30-1:30	Buffet Lunch: Wisconsin Ballroom
1:45-3:30	Panel 3
3:30-3:45	Coffee Break: Foyer
3:45-5:30	Panel 4
5:30-6:30	Reception: Wisconsin Ballroom
6:30	SAMSA Pre-Conference Dinner: University Room C-D

Program

Thursday, October 20, 2016 (Morning Session) Conference Room 1

7:30-8:30 Coffee and Light Breakfast: Foyer

8:30 Welcome: Roger D. Long, Eastern Michigan University

8:30-10:15 Panel 1: Sir Syed's Engagement with Social, Spatial, and Symbolic Identities

Chair: Yasmin Saikia, Arizona State University

M. Raisur Rahman, Wake Forest University

“Creating a Community: Sir Syed and His Contemporaries”

David Lelyveld, William Paterson University

“*Naichari* Nature: Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Reconciliation of Science, Technology, and Religion”

Mrinalini Rajagopalan, University of Pittsburgh

“Historic Archaeology and Modern Identity in Syed Ahmed Khan's *Aṣar-us-Ṣanādīd*”

10:15-10:30 Coffee Break: Foyer

10:30-12:15 Panel 2: Sir Syed's Pedagogical Vision

Chair: Laura Dudley Jenkins, University of Cincinnati

Irfan A. Omar, Marquette University

“Sir Syed on Islam and Other Religions”

Gail Minault, University of Texas, Austin

“Syed Ahmed Khan on, ‘The Present State of Education among Muhammadan Females’”

Asim Siddiqui, Aligarh Muslim University

“Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Politics of Banning and Burning Books”

12:30-1:30 Buffet Lunch: Wisconsin Ballroom

Program (Con't)

Thursday, October 20, 2016 (Afternoon Session) Conference Room 1

1:45-3:30 Panel 3: Sir Syed as a Social Reformer

Chair: M. Raisur Rahman

Margrit Pernau, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin

“The Emotions of Sir Syed’s Civilizing Mission”

Simon Wolfgang Fuchs, University of Cambridge

“How Can There Be a *Madhhab* after Sir Syed? Hanafi Islam and its Modernist Critique in South Asia”

Selim Karlitekin, Columbia University

“A Retreat or Leap Forward? Syed Ahmed Khan between Emancipation and Reform”

3:30-3:45 Coffee Break: Foyer

3:45-5:30 Panel 4: Sir Syed’s Legacy

Chair: Irfan A. Omar

Ilyse R. Morgenstein Fuerst, University of Vermont

“Indian Muslim Minorities, Minoritization, and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan”

Theodore P. Wright, Jr., State University of New York, Albany

“The Debate Between Muslim Nationalists and Nationalist Muslims in India from Sir Syed to Asauddin Owaisi”

Amber Abbas, Saint Joseph’s University

“A Living Legacy: Sir Syed Today”

Roger D. Long, Eastern Michigan University

“Syed Ahmed Khan and the Pakistan Movement”

5:30-6:30 Reception: Wisconsin Ballroom

6:30 SAMSA Pre-Conference Dinner: University Room C-D

Abstracts

Abbas, Amber

“A Living Legacy: Sir Syed Today”

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), the founder of the institution that became the Aligarh Muslim University gazes down on the institution from portraits in nearly every classroom and office. Though he is long dead, he often seems as present as the institution’s current administrators. His reputation as a reformer and a thinker has persisted, nearly unassailable in the minds of those associated with Aligarh; he represents a legacy of Muslim empowerment, and whatever difficulties the Muslim community may have faced are attributed to a failure to uphold the values he proclaimed. Sir Syed’s influence continues even now as the actions of university students, teachers and administrators are constantly measured against the ideals of his vision. Beyond the university, too, Sir Syed’s portrait sometimes appears alongside Jinnah’s as a founder of Pakistan. Annually, all over the world, Aligarh Old Boys gather to celebrate Sir Syed Day, on October 17 with recitations of poetry, food and fellowship. Sir Syed’s symbolic presence unifies Aligarians across time and space, and is a benevolent but constant force in the lives of students, alumni and administration of the university. I examine the meaning of Sir Syed’s legacy today through interpretation of oral history interviews with past and present Aligarians, as well as digital communications on the lively listservs associated with the Aligarh community to suggest that Sir Syed remains a living teacher, whose example remains unmatched, but whose ambitions remain unfulfilled.

Fuchs, Simon Wolfgang

“How Can There Be a Madhhab after Sir Syed? Hanafi Islam and its Modernist Critique in South Asia”

This paper intends to tackle a paradox. Some of the earliest and most forceful modern voices to critique the approach of the Islamic schools of law (*madhhab*) from both a Salafi and modernist viewpoint arose in South Asia. Yet, until today and in contrast to many Middle Eastern countries, *madhhab* identities remain vibrant in India and Pakistan. I am interested in mapping how both Barelvi and Deobandi religious scholars (*‘ulamā*) have responded to these challenges facing the established Islamic scholarly tradition with its commentaries and super-commentaries. How have Hanafi *‘ulamā* managed to defend the conviction that their school with its particular approach to Islamic law (*fiqh*) most closely matches the essentially unknowable *sharī‘a* hidden in the mind of God? Which arguments have they adduced that the Hanafi school of law provides intellectual tools and hermeneutical resources suitable for the modern age? How have these actors themselves reconceptualized their understanding of the purpose, meaning, and scope of the *maddhab* in the wake of Syed Ahmed Khan's critique?

Abstracts (Cont'd)

Fuerst, Ilyse R. Morgenstein

“Indian Muslim Minorities, Minoritization, and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan”

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan did more than participate in a discourse central to the questions of Muslims, identity, loyalty, and the British Crown, he helped shape it. This paper addresses Sir Syed’s participation—albeit asymmetrically—in the minoritization of Indian Muslims, specifically in the wake of the Great Rebellion of 1857. His responses to the Great Rebellion will be addressed, most notably *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind* (Causes of the Indian Revolt, 1857) and his review of Dr. Hunter’s *Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?* (1872). These texts demonstrate the ways in which Sir Syed contributed to the literature about Muslim identity, loyalty, and belonging; and specifically the ways in which his writings shed light on and contributed to processes of minoritization. This paper, then, aims to accomplish two primary goals: first, after establishing the processes of minoritization, to discuss how these processes emerged in earnest in the wake of the Great Rebellion; second and most significantly, how Sir Syed’s response to the Great Rebellion provides insight into his relationship not only to Muslims but to British views of Muslims. Sir Syed’s participation in elite, formative discourses about Islam and Muslims demonstrates the conflicted nature of Muslim identity as Muslims became minoritized: we can learn a great deal about the effects of the Great Rebellion on how Muslims were imagined by observing how Sir Syed simultaneously read his community against the readings of British intellectuals as well as how he characterized Muslims in light of this hegemonic discourse.

Karlitekin, Selim

“A Retreat or a Leap Forward? Syed Ahmed Khan between Emancipation and Reform”

The mid-nineteenth century saw what colonial observers called a “Mohammedan revival.” They cited the Ottoman series of modernist reforms, *tanzimat* (reorganization) that began in 1839, the revolt in north India in 1857, and Yakup Beg’s “Islamic State” founded in 1865 in the oasis city on the Silk Road, Kashgaria, in western China. Of the reformers, Syed Ahmed Khan was perhaps the most controversial figure due to his political and philosophical positions. From schools of law, *fiqh*, to education, Sir Syed proffered and practiced novel ways of *tezheeb* (development.) Sir Syed’s work can be described as a series of open experimentations, most important of which was the foundation of Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875. In this paper, I will focus on the political consequences for his creation of a vision for a cosmopolitan Muslim future. By elaborating on the debate around whether Indian Muslims should celebrate the Ottoman victory over the Greeks in 1897, I will show in what ways Syed’s program of reforms differed from those of the *tanzimat*. Often remembered for his allegiance to the British, Syed’s politics has been interpreted as a retreat in the face of defeat. I argue, however, that under his equivocations there lies a critique of Islamic political theology. *Tanzimat* was a flawed project for it relied on the presence of a state; it was reformism without the reform. Sir Syed’s vision of the future necessitated an emancipated “self.” Thus, rather than a defeat, the colonial condition was, for Sir Syed, a blessing in disguise for a radical break with the past and for a better future.

Abstracts (Cont'd)

Lelyveld, David

“*Naichari* Nature: Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Reconciliation of Science, Technology, and Religion”

Syed Ahmad Khan (“Sir Syed”) used the word “nature,” transliterated into Urdu to claim epistemological consistency between revealed text if the Qur`an, the Aristotelian tradition of Islamic philosophy, the empirical science of the Enlightenment, and the technological innovations that took place during his own lifetime (1817-98). In the context of British colonial domination, his intellectual project and its institutional realization – the Aligarh Scientific Society and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (forerunner of the Aligarh Muslim University) – were efforts to make room for Muslims in the advancement of knowledge and the fruits of capitalism. Sayyid Ahmad also stimulated an important literary movement in Urdu known as *naicharal sha`iri* (natural poetry), which adapted a strain of British romanticism that rejected the supposed artificiality of traditional poetics in favor of observation of birds, flowers, lakes and streams. The denial of an opposition between nature and human interventions foresees the philosophy of human self-assertion in the work of Muhammad Iqbal.

Long, Roger D.

“Syed Ahmed Khan and the Pakistan Movement”

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was, for the All-India Muslim League (founded 1906), the father of the two-nation theory and the ideologue of the Pakistan Movement. During the campaign for Pakistan, between the Lahore Resolution of March 23, 1940, and the creation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947, the name of Syed Ahmed Khan was used innumerable times to justify the claim that Muslims constituted a separate community deserving of their own state. To establish the claim for Pakistan the All-India Muslim League needed to be successful in the 1945-46 general elections. Sir Syed’s college, which became Aligarh Muslim University in 1920, became the arsenal of the League, its faculty provided the ideological justification for Pakistan, and its alumni and faculty became the backbone of the party organization. Sir Syed’s designation of Muslims as a separate community was based on a nineteenth-century analysis of the political and educational needs of Muslims but it ideally suited the development of a twentieth-century ethnogenesis and nationalist movement.

Abstracts (Cont'd)

Minault, Gail

“Syed Ahmed Khan on, ‘The Present State of Education among Muhammadan Females’”

The title of this paper/article refers to the testimony that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan gave before the Indian Education Commission in 1882: “The question of female education much resembles the question of the oriental philosopher who asked whether the egg or the hen were first created. Those who hold that women should be educated and civilized prior to the men are greatly mistaken. The fact is that no satisfactory education can be provided for Muhammadan females until a large number of Muhammadan males receive a sound education. The present state of education among Muhammadan females is, in my opinion, enough for domestic happiness, considering the present social and economic condition of the life of the Muhammadans of India.” Sir Syed had a definite priority, that is, the development of his college at Aligarh, designed to reform the education of Muslim men. He no doubt hoped for greater resources to be directed toward his institution. Was he against women’s education? He has been praised for his support of women’s education, although anyone reading the above quote would have to question that generalization. What then were Sir Syed’s views toward women’s education, and what did he mean by its “present state”? To answer these questions, one needs to consult a variety of his writings on the topic--not just his testimony before a British government body, when his motives were to urge wise expenditure. Among such writings are his biography of his maternal grandfather, Sirat-i-Faridiyya, in which he discusses his own mother’s education, and his articles on the subjects of women and educational reform that are part of his collected writings. Only after considering in greater detail his opinions and the contexts in which they were rendered, can one have a clearer idea of Sir Syed’s support—or not—of women’s education.

Omar, Irfan A.

“Sir Syed on Islam and Other Religions”

Consistent with the “normative” view of the history of Islamic-Western encounters, Muslims of the generation of Syed Ahmed Khan (SAK) in India saw the British as the ultimate “other”. They were rivals on many fronts; to the rulers and the military-minded, they were invaders and occupiers of lands previously under Muslim rule. They were the enemy. But they were also “Christian.” To Syed Ahmed Khan the British were superior (to Muslims, not Islam) in culture, education, and scientific knowledge and therefore they could serve as a model upon which Muslims could build their own path towards intellectual and material progress in a post-Muslim era in India. Three main questions that will guide this paper are: Was SAK’s somewhat positive view of the British colored by the fact that the latter represented not only an example of a “superior culture” but also a manifestation of “Christianity?” Did SAK see Christians as natural allies to Muslims because of their (quranic) status as *ahl-e-kitab* or “people of the book?” What were some of the key factors that led SAK to attempt to “refashion” Islam as a religion of progressive and modernist ideas?

Abstracts (Cont'd)

Pernau, Margrit

“The Emotions of Sir Syed’s Civilizing Mission”

Modernity has often been read as a process of a disciplining of the emotions. This paper looks at Sir Syed and his collaborators and the wider Aligarh movement. It asks how they interpreted this link between a certain way of restraining or cultivating emotions and their participation in a modernity, which they perceived as already taking place elsewhere, and with which they felt the need to catch up: modernity for them was a spatial as much as a temporal category. It is with this reference to modernity, aimed at, if not always achieved, that they have situated themselves and for which they have been admired and hated by their contemporaries and analyzed by many historians. At the same time, the life stories of these men and the curricula of the education they had gone through showed their deep indebtedness to the Indo-Persian concepts, knowledge, and interpretation of the world current in the nineteenth century. However, if language and concepts form the ways of looking at the world, they do not determine it as language is not a prison of meaning; the same books read in different contexts become different texts. How then did this heritage shape the particular way this generation of men negotiated modernity? These questions will be followed up in three steps, first by looking at which emotions *akhlaq* (ethics) books from the second half of the nineteenth century describe and prescribe and at the moral education through which they wanted to spread them; second, at reformist journals for their debates on the respective importance in education of *ta’lim* (instruction in the *Qur’an* or *hadith*, that is, sayings of the Prophet, and sometimes Islamic law), the imparting of knowledge, and *tarbiyat* (upbringing or the training of habits); and finally, at the exhortation in journals and newspapers to a certain emotional mindset which was increasingly action oriented and politically connoted.

Rahman, M. Raisur

“Creating a Community: Sir Syed and His Contemporaries”

This paper considers how some of Sir Syed's actions and ideas were received, supported, opposed, and debated during his lifetime. While he found strong support in some of his closest lieutenants such as Viqar-ul-Mulk (1841-1917) and Mohsin-ul-Mulk (1837-1907) who carried on his work after Sir Syed's death, those who opposed him included both conservatives and liberals who decried his deism and called him *nechari*, someone who had swallowed European agnostic naturalism—a term used pejoratively.

Abstracts (Cont'd)

Rajagopalan, Mrinalini

“Historic Archaeology and Modern Identity in Syed Ahmed Khan’s *Aṣar-us-Ṣanādīd*”

In the first edition of the *Aṣar-us-Ṣanādīd* (1847) Syed Ahmed Khan began his description of the Red Fort in Delhi with glorious qualifiers. He compared the majesty of the fort’s domes as competing with the sky itself; a single carved balustrade in the fort as more beautiful than all of the buildings in Delhi; and the size and extent of the fort’s walls as being so awesome as to befuddle the imagination of any individual. This is followed by a history of the fort’s seventeenth-century origins, its physical layout and the technological aspects of its construction, and six architectural drawings (woodcut prints) that present “truthful” views of the most important structures of the complex. Similar descriptions were offered for hundreds of other monuments in Delhi in Syed Ahmed’s 600-page encyclopedia of Delhi’s built heritage. This presentation explores the rhetorical ambience created by text, image, and affect in the first edition of the *Aṣar-us-Ṣanādīd*. It offers a less mediated perspective than the second 1854 edition which was heavily impacted by the intervention of the Royal Asiatic Society. The imagined audience for Syed Ahmed’s *Aṣar-us-Ṣanādīd* was a modern Indian who was able to understand his own position within a historical arc of technological innovation, aesthetic creation, and sovereign power. To this end Syed Ahmed integrated archaeology, scientific empiricism, Persianate traditions of genealogy, and Urdu literary forms to create a uniquely modern articulation of Indian subjectivity in nineteenth-century Delhi.

Siddiqui, Asim

“Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Politics of Banning and Burning Books”

In this paper I propose to analyze Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s response to William Muir’s orientalist text *Life of Mahomet* and compare it to the present trend of knee-jerk reactions among Muslims to texts or publications (including speech, radio-television programs) perceived to be against Islam and Muslims. My analysis will be guided by the following questions: Was Sir Syed’s response guided by his pragmatism or there was a wider intellectual current which made him write his *Al Khutbat Al Ahmadiya*? Was his response different from the contemporary Muslim opinion? Do we find echo of that debate in the 21st century? In other words, do we come across Muir’s arguments on Islam repeated in the twenty-first century in a more virulent form? How do Muslims respond to those arguments now and how do all controversies from Rushdie to Trump become relevant in this context? Was strengthening of collective identity a greater need than the assertion of identity in Sir Syed’s case? With growing islamophobia and with greater likelihood of provocations is there need to see Syed Ahmad Khan’s response afresh? My basic texts will be *Life of Mahomet* and *Al Khutbat al Ahmadiya*. The work of many other commentators such as Christian W. Troll, Bashir Ahmad Dar, Hafiz Malik and Shibli Nomani are relevant to my purpose.

Abstracts (Cont'd)

Wright, Jr., Theodore P.

“The Debate Between Muslim Nationalists and Nationalist Muslims in India from Sir Syed to Asauddin Owaisi”

An ethnic minority group in a democracy has a choice of strategies to gain representation in elections for legislatures: to join one of the major secular parties as individuals and work their way up; to form their own party based on pockets where they constitute a majority; thirdly, to establish “lobbies or pressure groups to influence legislation and policy from behind the scene; fourthly, to abandon politics and concentrate on developing resources and skills of general benefit to society as well as for their own members. Different types of minority ethnicity may favor different strategies depending on their assets, numbers and distribution. One often overlooked type is what I have called “former ruling elite” ethnicity, lacking in numbers but with a past of dominance. Indian Muslims are a prime example, but not unique. Hyderabad was a Muslim ruled princely state eventually under British suzerainty from 1720 until its conquest by the Indian army in 1948. Obviously not all or even most Muslims were literally in the elite, but they felt they were relative to the Hindu majority. Bahadur Yar Jung founded the Majlis Ittihadul Muslimineen in 1927 to perpetuate that dominance in an independent Hyderabad state. Suppressed in 1948, it was revived by Abdul Wahab Owaisi in 1957 and was able to win control of the inner city of Hyderabad where Muslims are a majority as well as a couple of seats in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly. Owaisi's son, Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi and grandson, Asaduddin won a seat in the Lok Sabha in Delhi. The latter was trained as a barrister in London and became a very articulate spokesman for his people in English and Urdu at the all-India level. Over the years, Asaduddin has shifted from defense of the parochial interests of the Muslims of old Hyderabad to assertions of the loyalty of Indian Muslims to India's secular constitution. The question by 2014 was no longer one of “creating another Pakistan” as charged by the Hindu nationalists, but of how to use Indian politics to promote Muslim literacy, education and development.

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Phone: (608) 251-5511  (608) 251-5511

Miles to conference venue: 0.5

[Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown](#)

Rate: \$154/night standard room + tax

440 W. Johnson St.

Phone: (608) 255-0360  (608) 255-0360

Miles to Conference venue: 0.4

Group name: South Asia Conference 2016

[The Lowell Center](#)

Rate: \$94/night for one person; additional \$12 for each person after that.

610 Langdon Street

Phone: (866) 301-1753  (866) 301-1753 FREE

Miles to conference venue: 0.6

Online booking: Click [here](#).

Reservation deadline: September 19, 2016

When calling to make reservations, refer to group code: SOASIA

Meal Tickets

The Thursday lunch buffet meal ticket, as well as all other meal tickets, may be purchased at the conference homepage at:

<https://www.southasiaconference.wisc.edu/>

The Thursday Lunch Buffet ticket costs \$15.

Call for Contributors

SAMSA Collected Papers

Vol. 1

Edited by: Roger D. Long, M. Raisur Rahman, and Sanaa Riaz

To celebrate seven decades of postcolonial scholarship on South Asian Muslims, SAMSA is planning the publication of a series of collected papers. The SAMSA Collected Papers series is dedicated to offering collections of papers that offer a rich variety of scholarly material on subjects dealing with any area of research pertaining to Muslims and Muslim life in any of the countries of South Asia, as well as Muslims in the South Asian diaspora. The aim of the series is to bring together seminal research being conducted on the South Asian Muslim experience both from a historical and a contemporary perspective. The Officers and Board Members serve as the Editorial Board of the series.

We seek contributions for Volume 1

We invite scholars without reference to seniority, gender, religious affiliation, or national origin to contribute their research for dissemination to the academic community and the general public in any area of South Asian Muslim studies or in any academic discipline. Among other topics, we seek essays in such areas as:

Tradition and modernity; Muslims and politics; Varieties in South Asian Muslim religious theory and practice; The South Asian Muslim diaspora; South Asian Muslim Literature and Film; Urban Muslims

The essays of approximately 6,000 words should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Roger D. Long, Eastern Michigan University, rlong@emich.edu,
M. Raisur Rahman, Wake Forest University, rahmanmr@wfu.edu, or
Sanaa Riaz, Metropolitan State University of Denver, sanaariaz@gmail.com

Call for Papers

46th Annual Conference on South Asia
Madison, Wisconsin, October 26-29, 2017
Southasiaconference.wisc.edu

South Asian Muslim Studies Association
2017 Pre-Conference

*Postcolonial Scholarship at 70:
Seven Decades of Research on South Asian Muslims
1947-2017*

Concourse Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin
Thursday, October 26, 2017

We invite scholars without reference to seniority, gender,
religious affiliation, or national origin
to contribute their research findings.

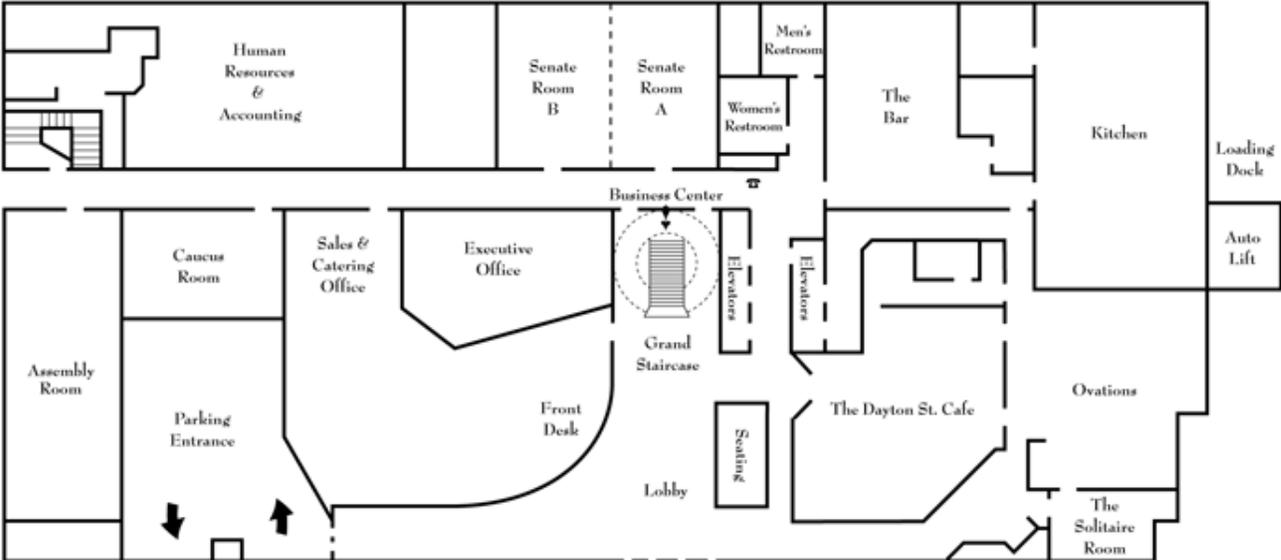
Individual papers or panel proposals are welcome
in any area of South Asian Muslim studies
in any of the countries of South Asia
and in the South Asian Muslim diaspora,
and in any academic discipline.

Please contact:

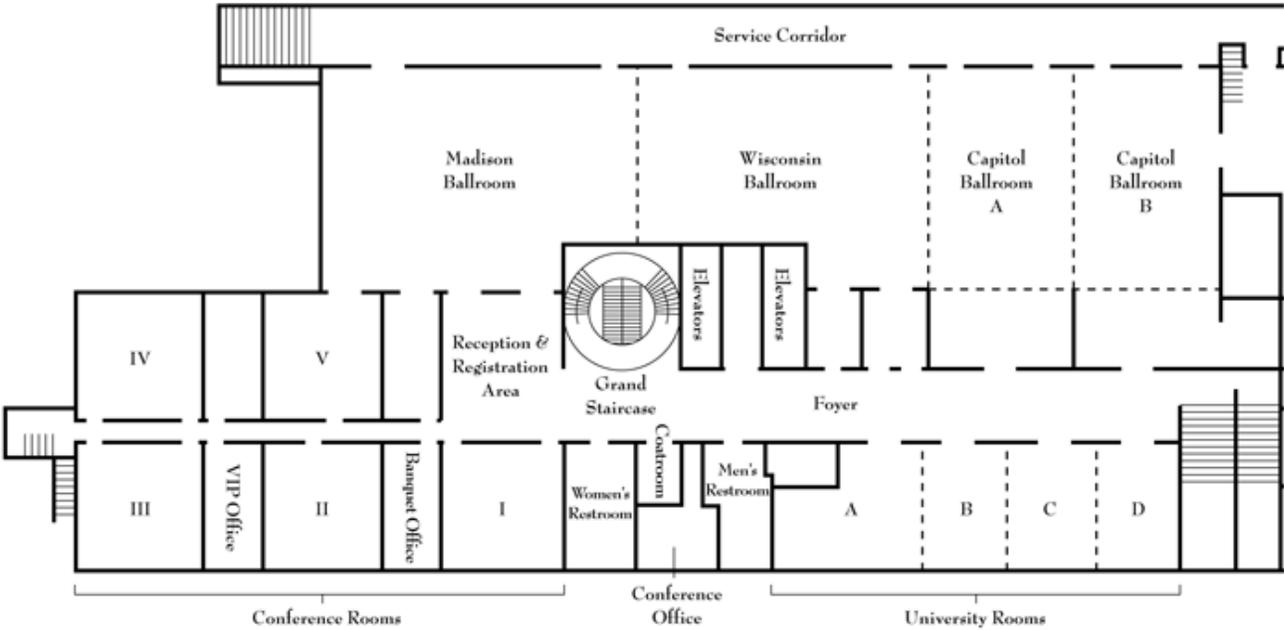
Roger D. Long, Conference Co-Chair
South Asian Muslim Studies Association, at:
rlong@emich.edu

Concourse Hotel

First Floor



Second Floor



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