

In Memoriam

Professor Fazlur Rahman

(1332-1408 AH / 1919-1988 AC)

On *Dhu al Hijjah* 12, 1408 AH, July 26, 1988 Professor Fazlur Rahman breathed his last as a result of post-cardiac surgery complications at the Billings Hospital in Chicago. At the time of his death he was the Harold H. Swift Distinguished Service Professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago where he had taught for about two decades. Born in Punjab (Pakistan) in 1332 AH / 1919 AC, Professor Fazlur Rahman was educated at the universities of Punjab and Oxford. He also taught at Durham (England) and McGill (Canada) and served as director, Central Institute of Islamic Research in Pakistan.

A prolific writer and an outstanding scholar of Islam in the tradition of Mohammad Iqbal, Dr. Fazlur Rahman influenced a whole generation of young Muslim intellectuals, students, and probably more importantly, his Western colleagues in the field of Islamic Studies. Although considered controversial on certain issues, he was a scholar of encyclopedic breadth in the true tradition of classical Islamic scholarship. His interests ranged from the classical period to modern times; from the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* to *fiqh*, philosophy and science; and from education and history to contemporary socio-political developments in the Muslim World. Throughout his career, however, his first and foremost loyalty and devotion had been to the Qur'an. He was a brilliant student and an extraordinarily perceptive commentator of the Qur'an. He lived, wrote, and thought for most of his life within a framework that was defined by his love and study of the Qur'an.

His was a mind of a logician and a philosopher and a heart of a devout Muslim. His writings on Islam were not only the product of a meticulous scholar with great intellectual rigor and analytical skills but also that of a passionate and devoted Muslim who was deeply concerned about the spiritual, moral and material well-being of his fellow Muslims. He believed in the fundamental importance of intellectual renaissance as the most important prerequisite for Islamic revival. A careful examination of his writings reveals a vigorous mind working in the highest traditions of human scholarship of East and West and providing the intellectual and moral underpinnings for

the revitalization of the Islamic *Ummah*. Very few Muslim religious thinkers since Mohammad Iqbal have contributed so much and of such a great scholarly worth as has Professor Fazlur Rahman. His was one of the most energetic and productive Muslim minds of our time. His death is a great loss to Muslims and to Islam. He has left a void that cannot be easily filled. His absence will be deeply felt in the scholarly community of the *Ummah*.

The entire staff at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences mourn the death of Professor Fazlur Rahman. He was a founding member of the Editorial Advisory Board of this Journal from its inception, as originally titled, the American Journal of Islamic Studies. He took keen interest in its growth and development. Despite his failing health, he came to Washington recently to visit the IIIT and delivered the talk which we are publishing in this issue. May Allah bless his soul and reward him abundantly for his services in His Cause.

Mumtaz Ahmad
Associate Editor