

Ulasan Buku/Book Review

Social Revolution of Islam. By Muzaffar Husain. 2004. New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 307pp., including bibliography and indexes. Reviewed by Fariza Md. Sham.

Handling the Social changes in Muslim society must be selective and precise with knowledge. The fast moving information in the technological era has increased the pace of challenges in the social life especially within the Muslim's society. To handle these changes, Muslims must play their roles and Islamic missionaries must know their responsibilities. Islamic missionaries must be able to make plans, strategies and exploits the vast new knowledge in handling the problems that occur from these changes.

The author has divided this book into two parts. Part one is about the theories in Islam. It has four chapters which discuss the theories within the scopes of basic faith, human rights in Islam, the different concepts of human rights in Islam compared to the West and the philosophy of Islam. Part two discusses about the basic issues in Muslim societies. These issues are elaborated in five chapters which include discussion on early Islamic society, social freedom within Islam, Islam in the modern society with the modern concept, the contract system and philosophy in the nutshell.

In the preface of this book, Muzaffar Husain discusses the meaning of revolution. The author defines revolution as the fundamental change. Regarding Islam, he states that Islam itself has emerged on the horizon of the world civilization. This is the great revolution that is based on continuing spiritual and cultural principles and concepts.

The part one consists of chapter one to chapter four. The first chapter discusses about social revolution of Islam based on the Qur'anic verses and citations. The author also discusses on the failure of the human rights nowadays. Regarding the failure of human rights, he states that, "After taking stock of the failure of the national constitutions and international charters in protecting the fundamental rights of man, we now come to the basic question: Why could not man so far succeed in finding out a satisfactory arrangement for the protection of his rights, and why this problem has defied thought, intellect and understanding of man so far?" (p. 3).

The second chapter describes the fundamentals of the principles of rights in Islam. The author says that to deal with the practical problems of protecting rights and freedoms, Muslim intellectuals and statesmen began to adopt the principles of European constitutionalism in the nineteenth century. By the end of the twentieth century, all Muslim countries had adopted constitutions containing some or all of the principles of rights set forth in the international human rights law.

In the third chapter Muzaffar Husain focuses on the human right concept in Islam compared to the west. The author believes that, the principles of human rights practiced by the United Nations and the West has failed. He explains, "The western people claim upholding of the fundamental rights for the whole mankind but their attitude is practically against this assertion. Their concept of rights is based on their theory of nationality and racial discrimination."(p. 55).

He singles out that the human right in Islam means those rights that are granted by God. Rights granted by kings and legislative assemblies can be changed but no authority can withdraw the rights conferred by God according to Islamic law.

In the fourth chapter, the author discusses philosophy of Islam within the human concept. The author states that there are a great fundamental difference between the perspectives of Islam and the West in the matter of human rights. The Western perspective may by and large be called anthropocentric in the sense that man is regarded as constituting the measure of everything since he is the starting point of all thinking and action. The perspective of Islam on the other hand is Theo centric-God conscious.

The part two covers chapter five to chapter nine. The fifth chapter explains about the theory of social evolution from Hegel, Marx and Darwin. The theory of social evolution which emerges from a combined views of the doctrines of these philosophers contains the following major principles: (1) The evolution of life takes place through conflict. (2) Human progress is the consequence of this conflict. (3) Only the strongest have the right to live and develop in this universe. (4) Success by whatever means it may be achieved is the main object of existence. (p.114)

Instead of humanizing man, this philosophy has actually transformed man into a brute rather than making this world a heaven of peace, it has changed this world into a veritable hell. The first impact of the philosophy of social evolution is that man has come to regard material progress as the highest achievement of life. Secondly, this philosophy has plunged the future of humanity into darkness and

thirdly, because this doctrine is founded on the idea that the evolution of man takes place through conflict between hostile forces, hence instead of promoting cooperation among human beings, it has aroused in them a fierce sense of jealousy and competition.

In chapter six, Muzaffar Husain discusses about social freedom from Islamic perspective. This includes the freedom of belief and thought, equal status for all human beings and male-female relationship. The author writes that Islam believes in an identity of aim in the individual and society, in the identity of interests of the various societies within a race, and in an identity of purpose among all the races of mankind. The following are the bases of justice in Islam: (a) Absolute freedom of conscience. (b) The complete equality of all men. (c) The permanent mutual responsibility of society. (p.136)

In chapter seven, the author declares that the world has changed and the Muslim society is also changing. Since that distant time, there have been immense changes in life – mental, economic, political and social. But the spirit of Islam has remained essentially sound, and its inner force had left clear imprints on the course of human life in the broadest sense. Islam has left its marks on the forms and objectives of civil government throughout fourteenth centuries to the present day. There is no practical or military institution in the world does not owe something to Islam; and this has been true even in those ages when the Muslim world has been weak and divided, when it has seen its spiritual, social and economic life disturbed. The author believes that the power of Islam can changed the Muslim society. He stresses that, “I personally, quite apart from the religious faith, have an absolute belief in the possibility of a renewal of Islamic life within the Muslim world. I believe in the soundness of Islam as a worldwide, rather a local, system for the future. I have no desire to take refuge in vain speculation, but I do believe this be not only possible, but even easy”. (p. 201).

The author highlights the European views on Islam. There are some impartial thinkers in the nineteenth century who discovered how much value there is in the religion of Muhammad. From this perspective, there has arisen a salutary change in the attitude of Europe towards Islam. Thus, Europe has seen a great advance in the past years of the twentieth century, and has even started to respect the faith of Muhammad. But, however, this may be, Muslim must at least wait until time has proved such a statement, for two principal reasons. First there is this deep-seated and inherited hostility to Islam in the very existence of our faith, as being an obstacle in their path. Secondly,

European culture is rooted in material foundations and the influence of intellectual and spiritual interests are very weak.

The eighth chapter begins with a brief sketch of the life of the Prophet for he was the moving spirit which restored the laws of reason from oblivion and brought light in a country of darkness and sin. In this chapter, the author also explains how the contract was made which brought about the civil society in which laws of the sword were replaced by the articles of peace. The contracts of Medina do explain not only the origin of civil society in contract but also of its government. Contract in Islam, therefore, is a reality and not a mere fiction or only a mere idea of reason.

The ninth chapter is about political system in Islam and the principles of morality. In Islam, the political system is based on the three principles namely Oneness of God, Prophethood and Caliphate. On the principles of morality, the author says that Islam gives human beings a clear outline of its moral system by stating clearly the desired good and useful virtues and the undersired, harmful and evil values.

The book is suitable to be read and analyzed, especially for researchers in Islamic studies and social changes in order to understand the social changes mentioned by M. Husain.

As a conclusion, this book is very important for the Muslim society, especially for academician, researchers and students in the discipline of social changes. Through this book, the readers can understand about social changes in Islam and how the role of Muslim society has to handle the changes globally.

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