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Book Review

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Nabila Tabassum

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BOOK REVIEW: PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF THE QUR'AN CURRENT DETERIORATION IN MUSLIM UMMAH

Nabial Tabassum¹

Shahid, Muhammad Shoiab. *Psychological Foundation of the Qur'an Current Deterioration in Muslim Ummah*. Bloomington: Xlibris, 2016, PP. 238.

This book is based on logical analysis and research on the current deteriorated state of Muslim Ummah as well as solution to this crisis. The author explains psychology of religion and argues, "religion is the need of mankind for passing a meaningful life with peace and stability." He emphasizes that religion does not cause frictions, conflicts or fights among people, instead the interpretation and practices of people, their personal liking for political or socio-economic interests harms the mankind. The author has attempted to address the misunderstandings and objections about Islam and the Qur'an. The book presents holy Qur'an as a moderate and logical path of life. The author narrates several social, religious, and political interrelated concepts that led to changes in the original version of Islam and ultimately caused decline of Muslim empires.

The book answers the question of why and how the Muslim world is in its present state of deterioration. It also deals with as to how this crisis can be addressed successfully. The author has attempted to present Qur'an as a sole reference to reunite Muslims who have split into several religious, political and social divisions. He has provided logical data about human nature, women's rights, family unit, terrorism and extremism, as well as other related issues with healing measures.

The book is divided into fifteen chapters. The author describes the transcription of the Qur'an that how Qur'an addresses the mankind and high lights the rhetorical uniqueness of the holy book. The Qur'an addresses the humanity using intellectual reasoning and motivates to think critically. This style of Qur'an on the one hand, is helpful to reinforce the faith of Muslims. On the other hand, it encourages non-Muslims to study the authenticity of the religion Islam, as Qur'an provides numerous

¹ Department of Islamic Studies, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan. 

opportunities to examine the truthfulness and soundness of Qur'anic message through the critical lens of empirical evidence. With reference to several Qur'anic verses the author sheds light on the role of Ahle-Kitab and munafqeen. While encompassing the activities of non-believers, tribal chiefs, Ahle-kitab and hypocrites in opposition to the Prophet PBUH, the author explains that how Prophet PBUH dominated and conquered the opponents and proved his worth as the last prophet sent on Earth. The author advocates the Islamic belief system and presents it as moderate and logical path of life. He argues that psychologically human beings are born with reason. Psychologically, a personality is the combination of , thoughts, attitudes, values, learned behavior and direction of life. Therefore, logical presentation of belief based on observation is ideal for individuals. The author presents a short history of Muslim rise and fall and admits with sorrow that Islam is mostly damaged by the Muslims, when they ignored collective benefits and preferred their personal gains and political agendas.

Moreover, emergence of new sects with contradictory thoughts gave birth to sectarianism, several politics based religiosity further damaged the unity of Muslims. Before presenting the issues of contemporary Muslims he highlights the unique role of the last prophet (PBUH) as described in the Qur'an and presents Prophet Muhammad PBUH as a role model and the practices of the prophet as a source of Islamic law alongside the Qur'an. He high lights that Prophet PBUH not only served as religious leader rather he served as the political head of Muslims' state. He stresses that sunnah of the prophet (PBUH) is the great source of guidance for everyday life affairs and it must be taken as a source to unite the masses. Then the author generally discusses the present day human issues with reference to the Qur'anic verses and briefs that Allah has revealed Qur'an with complete knowledge about all aspects of human life and provided full guidance to the human beings.

The author sheds light on the religious sectarianism and innovatory interpretations in Islam. He says Islam condemns sectarian grouping and fighting among Muslims rather it strictly advices peace. He appreciates traditional Muslims who follow the Islamic traditions and criticizes the liberal Muslims who feel proud in practicing western culture. The author criticizes several prevailing practices of Muslim world such as innovations in Islam, non-Islamic practices as well as the power struggle within various sects and countries in the Muslim world. He condemns the current Islamic leadership's desire to overthrow the opponents, creating harassment and killing Muslims through

terrorist activities. As in the history of Muslims, certain people used the religious umbrella for self-projection and personal gains by fooling the ignorant Muslims. The author is of the view that most of the religious extremism is sponsor based and emerged by sponsored figures and semi-educated Muslims who misguide people with their poor Islamic knowledge. He condemns the role of certain fake religious personalities in preaching negativity with their own sectarian agendas. He points out that people who control the masses by understanding their psychology, are the best applied psychologists who are smart in their fields to figure out the target population suitable for their personal agenda. Moreover, the author discusses the current human psychology and mass media applications and emphasizes on the need of new preaching practices for religious awareness of the new generation. He allocates a sufficient space to discuss the importance of modern-day facilities and psychological techniques in educating, training, and interacting with the younger generation for positive output. In this respect, he emphasizes Muslim preachers and intellectuals are required to apply effective modern day technology as well as psychological techniques to guide and lead the new generation towards a moderate and modest Islam as presented in the Qur'an.

The author advocates Islamic concepts regarding women's right and family unit. He argues that Islam has presented disciplined domestic life and Qur'an presents a respectable, dignified status of women based on rights and duties to discourage disunity between the spouses. He points out western propaganda against Islamic family system and gives logical explanation for gender's role, marital system, sexual relationship, polygamy, and divorce. The author condemns terrorism and extremism, as this social cancer is against the teachings of the Qur'an. Terrorists involved in suicidal attacks, target killings, destroying the state property are revengeful and selfish. Such terrorist groups are sponsored and trained by various foreign states. In case where these groups present them as Muslim, in fact they are not true Muslims rather they are hypocrites who serve their own agenda. He presents a detailed analysis with solution of the current flow of extremism and terrorism that is defaming Islam.

He outlined the prevailing factors that facilitate extremism and terrorism in a national set up and suggested that main solution lies in bringing improvements in educational system with a special emphasis on precise awareness of the message of the Qur'an. Furthermore, new generation must be equipped with a national spirit, ethical values. He further points out that media being a most influential tool should be used to bring a

positive change in the society. The author describes ruh, angels and jinns in the light of Qur'an and cuts down the affiliations of simple-natured, illiterate Muslims that are based on cultivated unconscious fears of superhuman powers like jinns. He also explains the relationship between heart and mind and concludes that people with optimistic life style calmness of the heart and peace of the mind. The positive signals from the heart leave a dynamic impact on the nervous and hormones, this gives the evidence of heart's decision making and wellbeing of the whole body.

Thus, the heart functions like the brain, as narrated in the Qur'an. Furthermore, the author describes the most important faith of rebirth in Islam and warns mankind about the accountability process on the day of the judgement. Several Qur'anic verses present detailed description of the day of the judgement for the insight of humans. Details about heaven and hell further describe the concept of reward and punishment. The visual description about the day of the judgement are given for the insight and awareness of the human beings who consider present life as the final and are not preparing for the world hereafter.

In nutshell, the author extensively dilates on the crisis of Islamic civilization and provides an overview of religious, social, political, and cultural issues that resulted disunity in Muslims. The author explores the lessons from past experiences and suggests that Qur'anic teachings are the only solution, as the holy Qur'an provides complete guidance to lead an admirable and successful life encompassing all aspects of human life. However, a crucial societal factor missing in the book is social justice, the trigger that sparked centuries of socio-economic and technological advancement in the Muslim world. In addition, social justice is a key factor responsible for the development of human beings and Islam gives maximum attention to human rights, uplifting people morally, spiritually, and financially. Overall, this book is an excellent piece of work based on logic and observation, at a layman's mental level to address misconceptions about Islam and Qur'an.