

Book Reviews

Ideology of Pakistan. By Sharif al-Mujahid. Pakistan: Islamic Research Institute, 2001 (1974). Pp. 236. With a foreword by Zafar Ishaq Ansari. ISBN 969-408-218-8.

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Studies dealing with the emergence of Pakistan in 1947 point to multiplicities of theories and few conjectures. Some of these theories look at the movement for Pakistan and the strength it gained from an “elite” perspective; others explain the emergence of Pakistan from the perspective of the “masses.” A third perspective combines the above two approaches and thus provides a comprehensive explanation of the forces shaping the destiny of Muslims in India. Sharif al-Mujahid’s *Ideology of Pakistan*, a substantially revised version of an earlier paper, belongs to the third category. He merges the “womb” theory, to which even the founder of Pakistan seems to have subscribed, and lays down the basis of Muslim nationhood and of Pakistan. The author, however, adds the “event-making” man theory without which Pakistan might not have materialized. Given the fact that Muslim nationalism was Islam based and “the underlying motivation behind the Pakistan demand was primarily ideological,” the author justifiably devotes three out of five chapters to the discussion of ideology delineating its nature (chapter 5), its need (chapter 1) and its never ending role in the quest for Pakistan and beyond (chapter 3). Sharif al-Mujahid thus provides a comprehensive, the most cogent and a highly convincing analysis of the forces and factors leading to the creation of Pakistan and what it entails for the post-independent Pakistan. The book is theoretically informed, methodologically sound and empirically grounded and thus has the potential of closing the debate on the country’s *raison d’etre* once and for all.

Pakistan's emergence as an independent state was predictable because the Muslims of India tended to view themselves as a separate nation and they had "event-making" personalities, especially Jinnah who postulated the two-nation theory successfully. The Muslims of India insisted that they represented a distinct nation and hence entitled to self-determination and *de jure* recognition. As adherents of Islam and descendents of a conquering people, they found it difficult to entertain the thought of Hindu rule that epitomizes pantheism as against Islam's monotheistic belief. It would be a serious error to suggest that there was no interaction between the Muslim and Hindu communities and that Muslims did not adopt certain aspects of Hindu culture. The Muslims, as Iqbal pointed out, out-hindued the Hindus but this did not engender unity or a common brotherhood. It is a curious myopia that would perceive Hindus and Muslims as forming a single community simply because they have long been cohabitants of the subcontinent. In point of fact the two communities maintained distance from one another. This was true in the manner of worship, dress, dietary habits, and worldly outlook. This being the case, it is not unusual that friction should exist between them. With British departure and the imminence of Hindu political dominance, only a separate state would placate Muslim fears and satisfy Muslim nationalist aspirations. As Sharif al-Mujahid puts it, "If the Islamic way of life could not be preserved in all-India set up, it should be saved wherever it was possible. Pakistan, or more accurately the demand for it, was thus a last-ditch attempt: an attempt to centralize 'the life of Islam as a cultural force' in a specified territory"(p. 60). The partition of India was the only way to realize this claim.

Sharif al-Mujahid insists that without Jinnah "an historical event of tremendous significance, such as the creation of Pakistan" would not have materialized (p. 18). Under his leadership, the Muslim League developed into a "formidable political machine, with the requisite unity of command, communication networks, organizational strength, and muscle power" (p. 71). Thus armed, Jinnah moved forward to restore power to Muslim India, claimed full nationhood and self-determination for Muslims and achieved Pakistan. "[A] reading of Jinnah's political discourse in respect of Muslim entity since 1935 indicates a remarkable consistency" (p. 74). Pakistan was the result chiefly of religious nationalism. It meant a refutation of the Westphalian model and the emergence of ideological nationalism. Jinnah, the greatest Muslim after

Aurangzeb, made Islam “the very *raison d’être* of Muslim India’s goal. Pakistan was visualised in terms of a “free Islam in free India” (p. 78). Thus, Z.I. Ansari notes:

With a feeling of joyful and genuine pride, he [Jinnah] called Pakistan ‘*the Muslim state of Pakistan*’, ‘*the premier Islamic State*’, and a ‘*bulwark of Islam*.’ He could not understand ‘a section of the people who deliberately wanted to create mischief and made propaganda that the Constitution of Pakistan would not be made on the basis of *Shariat* (emphasis original) (pp. xx-xxi).

Sharif al-Mujahid concurs, that Pakistan was envisaged as an Islamic democracy, a system in which “Islamic values would form the basis of public morality in a democratic dispensation” (p. 82). Unfortunately, the ruling elite in Pakistan took recourse to Machiavellianism to amass power and pelf at the expense of morality, equity, social justice, and ultimately the nation leading to the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. The decade of “praetorian” rule under General Ayub Khan, his misuse of Islam to justify authoritarianism, and his policies that drove the wedge between East and West Pakistan is very well highlighted. Unfortunately, Sharif al-Mujahid makes no mention of Z.A. Bhutto and Yahya Khan in the tragic and violent break-up of Pakistan. Admittedly, Yahya Khan’s period was an interlude between the “Ayub era” and the break-up of Pakistan. But not to mention him even once in a 236-page study is to exonerate him from all the blame.

The break-up of Pakistan into two does not indicate a “flaw” in the concept of Islamic nationalism. “Two nations have become three – all separate and independent of the other.” It is, rather, a case of two Muslim brothers deciding to build separate houses without abandoning their religious identities. Bangladesh has not repudiated Islamic nationalism. “The [Bengali] masses, it may be noted, had never wavered in their adherence or loyalty to this ideology” (p. 101). This is true as well of Bengali elite.

Bangladesh, it must be pointed out, became independent in 1971 all of a sudden. It was not pre-planned, but the Pakistani army clamp down on civilians in East Pakistan resulting from the ruling elite’s decision not to share power or resources with East Pakistan inevitably led to the formation of a new state. Barring few radicals, the Bengali leadership did not think of mounting a deliberate movement to undo Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman never once declared the

independence of Bangladesh. All along, his fight was for the “emancipation” of East Bengalis. His historic March 7, 1971 speech, which is hailed as the turning point in the East-West relations, ended with “joy Bangla” and “joy Pakistan.” In the 1970 elections, the Awami League nominated its leading figures for national rather than provincial seats, and thus prepared itself to play a leading role at the national level. In his discussion with Yahya Khan, he declared himself to be the majority leader of all Pakistan. Finally, even after the emergence of Bangladesh, Mujib assured Z.A. Bhutto that he will try to keep some link with Pakistan. Once in Bangladesh, he saw the intensity of public hatred and had to change his mind.

Yet, Bangladesh came to be associated with secular symbols and ideologies, until the state controlled reversals in the post-Mujib period. It needs to be stressed, however, that Sheikh Mujib’s secularism was a reaction to the politicization of religion during the Pakistani days, and hence he defined it in a unique manner to mean non-communalism. Secularism was meant to stop political parties from exploiting religion for political purposes. Otherwise, he projected himself as a practicing Muslim, for example, by offering *munājāt* and prayers before giving his speeches. He invoked “Allah” and used other religious idioms like *inshāllāh* and *alḥamdulillāh* in his speeches. State-owned radio and television stations began their programmes with recitations of verses from the Qur’ān. He sanctioned the establishment of Islamic centres of learning and attended the 1974 Islamic summit to gain acceptance in the Islamic world. He also established an Islamic Foundation in 1975. When the army seized power, it was decided to set up two Islamic universities, one in Shantidanga, and the other at Santosh. Post-Mujib Bengali elite shied away from the word secular and emphasized Bangladesh’s Muslim identity and made Islamic faith as a characteristic of full membership in the Bangladeshi nation.

Sharif al-Mujahid is quite correct in arguing that the emergence of Bangladesh is not a manifestation of an ideological disruption. It would not be an exaggeration to say that without Muslim Bengali support, perhaps, there might not have been a Pakistan. Indeed, without Bengali Muslims constituting the eastern wing of Pakistan, there would have not been any Bangladesh. What is being stressed here is that both Pakistan and Bangladesh have refuted the Westphalian model and embraced Islamic nationalism.

Sharif al-Mujahid has been a serious student of the history of Indo-Pakistan, its leading figures and the problems and paradoxes of national integration with special reference to Pakistan. He is familiar with events and personalities and is ably suited to describe and analyze the *raison d'être* of Pakistan and by extension of Bangladesh. His book is serious in both conception and execution. The result is and should be of great help in comprehending the ideology of Pakistan.

Issues in the Study of the Qur'ān. By Thameem Ushama (Kuala Lumpur: Ilmiyyah Publishers, 2002), Pp. 474. ISBN: 983-2092-69-8.

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Over the centuries, 'ulamā' have produced great works in Arabic as well as in Persian and Urdu languages. The exegetical works by Muslim scholars in English are, however, not many and the ones available do not meet the demands of the students of higher learning. Thameem Ushama's *Issues in the Study of the Qur'ān* fills this gap. The main objective of his study is to make English speaking people understand clearly the *kalām Allāh* in accordance with what has been narrated by the Companions, Successors, and the exegetes of the Qur'ān. Thameem emphasizes that a proper understanding of the Qur'ānic sciences necessitates an understanding of its authenticity, the textual order, various modes and methodologies which have been worked out by Muslim theologians, exegetes and the Muslim scholars in different languages throughout the history of the Qur'ānic exegesis.

The book is divided into four parts. Part one, composed of nine chapters, discusses the conceptual, methodological and historical development of the Qur'ānic sciences. The concept of *wahy* (revelation), its process, preservation and inscription, *makkī* and *madanī* revelations, its compilation and authenticity, its textual order and *asbāb al-nuzūl* are explained in detail. This part focuses on the gradual development of Qur'ānic sciences from the period of the prophet Muḥammad (SAS) till today. It highlights the views of the Muslim