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Hasan al-Bannā and his Vision

Hasan al-Bannā: Vision and Mission, by Thameem Ushāmā. Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1995. Pp. 176. ISBN 967 9963 93 4.

The need for a book with sympathetic understanding and analysis of the contributions of Ḥasan al-Bannā and al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn in English has been fulfilled by Thameem Ushāmā's work, which portrays the vision, mission, personality, and efforts of al-Bannā. The book is informative and provides a detailed review of the history of this great movement.

The first chapter provides a brief overview of Islamic revivalism from 18th century onwards, with particular reference to the efforts of Shāh Walī-Allāh, Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, Jamāluddīn al-Afghanī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and M. Rashid Riḍā. This is followed in Chapter 2 by a discussion on the emergence of Islamic organizations in Egypt as part of attempts at promoting pan-Islamism. The author discusses how al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn tried to maintain purity in doctrine and ideology with the aim of founding an Islamic state. Cherishing its multifarious aims, ambitions, and aspirations, the author regards al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn as an example for Islamic movements throughout the world. This view can, however, be challenged by critics who say that the movement failed to establish an Islamic state despite opportunities of working with successive governments in Egypt.

Chapters 3 and 4 are concerned with the life and education of Ḥasan al-Bannā. It also analyses his background and organizational experiences—factors that provided him with extraordinary ability to supervise the vast activities of his movement. It is interesting to read the details of the Ismaʿīliyah meeting of March 1928 between Ḥasan al-Bannā and six of his followers which later led to the establishment of al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn.

Chapter 5 discusses the participation of al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn in Egyptian politics. Al-Ikhwān, according to the author, rejected any form

of compromise with the British and stood opposed to several Egyptian governments. The author appears to be sympathetic to this uncompromising attitude of the al-Ikhwān, as well as their inability to utilize to their maximum opportunities for cooperation with Egyptian governments at the time. It seems that internal differences in the movement, discussed in Chapter 6, could also be attributed to the hardline position of its leaders. The author has chosen to discuss only two instances of discord inside the movement. Furthermore, he has made no attempt at a critical analysis of stands taken by opposing sides and of the possible ideological and intellectual factors that might have caused them. Differences in the postrevolution Ikhwān are not discussed either.

In Chapter 7, a detailed account is presented on al-Ikhwān's involvement in Palestine jihad and its campaign for the declaration of jihad against the British occupation of Egypt. As a result, the movement was subjected to various types of harassment, restriction and eventual dissolution in 1948. The discussion would have been greatly enriched if the author had analysed al-Ikhwān's views of various types of jihad.

Chapter 8 deals with the martyrdom of Hasan al-Bannā, while Chapter 9 considers the re-establishment of his movement and its participation in the Egyptian revolution of 1952. The author claims to have unearthed some hidden facts in his account, but the facts recorded in these chapters are not unknown as they have been widely discussed in the writings of al-Ikhwān.

Chapter 10 contains valuable information about various reforms advocated and implemented by this movement. It outlines the Ikhwān's aim of drafting a constitution based on the Qur'ān and Sunnah for Egypt. It discusses the Ikhwān's educational, economic, social, political, and welfare reforms and contributions. However, the author refrains from discussing the spiritual reforms and training, one of the distinguishing contributions of al-Ikhwān.

Chapter 11 looks at the impact of al-Ikhwān on other countries such as Sudan, Pakistan, India, Iraq, and some European countries. This chapter suffers from two weaknesses. First, the discussion is very brief and hence could not do justice to the topic under consideration. Second, the author claims that all Islamic organizations that fought against exploitation accepted the methodology and concepts of al-Ikhwān. This however contradicts his recognition of the difference in methodology of al-Ikhwān and the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī of Pakistan. There should have been specific reference in this chapter to organizations that were directly influenced by al-Ikhwān so as to gauge the extent of its impact.

The organizational structure and membership of al-Ikhwān are dealt with in chapter twelve. Very little is said about *usraḥ* organization and activities. *Jawlah* training and its organizational structure and the impact of Sufism on al-Bannā are also not attended to.

The book, as rightly described by the author, provides an insight about the shortcomings that many movements could face during the course of their struggle. It suffers from various typographical errors, especially in the references. The bibliography also needs to be rearranged according to bibliographic rules.

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Political System of Islam

Political System of Islam, by Lukman Thaib. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Amal, 1994. Pp. 184.

Lukman Thaib's book addresses a variety of topics, including political legitimacy, the Islamic state, the position of non-Muslims and women in public offices, political parties, electoral politics and nationalism. Thus this book, is a collection of essays on various aspects of Islamic political system.

The first chapter deals with the legitimacy of state in Islam. Most of the discussion, however, deals with the migration of the Prophet (SAS) and his companions to al-Madīnah and the consequent establishment of the first Islamic state there. Curiously absent from this discussion, as from the whole book, is any mention of the Constitution of al-Madīnah. The second chapter is devoted to the objectives of the Islamic state. It needs to be emphasized that the objectives of Islamic state constitute the basis of its legitimacy.

In the two succeeding chapters, the author discusses the legitimacy of political authority and sovereignty in Islam. He uses these concepts to mean the "right to rule," but at times they are used to refer to "those in authority." This conceptual confusion is compounded by the author's interchangeable use of "political authority," "political power," and