

substantiated to by referring directly to the Qur'ān. Three observations, however, are in order.

Firstly, the term "convert" used in the book is inappropriate, at least from the Islamic perspective which says that all people are born Muslims. It is through their voluntary choice, or through the influence of their parents, that they subscribe to other religions. Therefore, when one accepts Islam he *returns* to it, which makes him a "revert," rather than a "convert."

Secondly, the criticism of women-abuse in Muslim societies is unfair, since the author's analysis is based upon quite limited observations and hunches rather than upon empirical data. Furthermore, abuse of women and children is a universal problem, and is prevalent in industrialised societies as well. For a balanced presentation, an analysis and report on women abuse in the West is sorely needed.

Finally, though the author in his preface mentions that this book is written primarily for Muslims, it contains insights on critical issues which may benefit the non-Muslims as well. Thus books like this must also be made available to non-Muslims. The *da'wah* effort in North America needs such writings and involvement of more indigenous Muslims, and their viewpoints are a critical need of the time. Writers must choose publishers who can market the book to the non-Muslim audience as well. Such books must also be researched in various Islamic organizations in order to study and incorporate recommendations from the "reverts," facilitating their assimilation in the Muslim society and make organized efforts toward better future planning in Islamic propagation.

The book is a positive contribution to the growing body of literature on Islam and Muslims in North America. It is all the more welcome as it sheds light on the process of "reversion" as well as how those who embrace Islam look at the Muslims in general.

***Political Science: An Islamic Perspective*, by Abdul Rashid Moten. Hampshire: Macmillan Press 1996. Pp. 224. ISBN 0-333-64311-9**

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This book is concerned with the basic issues of Islamic polity and

political reality in the Muslim world; its encounter with external forces, and its responses and reactions to the modern intellectual climate. The author uses historical analysis to investigate the extent to which *shar'ah* is applied, modified and neglected in these Muslim societies. He analyses the period of *khulafā' al-rāshidūn* and discusses the views of prominent thinkers from Umayyad through the Abbasid to the contemporary period. The study is comparative in that it points out the differences and similarities between the Western and Islamic concepts and gives sufficient justification for preferring the Islamic alternative.

Islam, secularism and the Muslim world are included as part of a prologue to the main issues discussed. Three versions of secularism—Western, Marxist and Third World—are presented. It seems that the Muslim world adopted secularism as a mode of governing the masses during the course of aping the Western ethos and domination. Several Muslim states like Bangladesh, Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, and Turkey are cited as some of the examples of the Third World secularism. It would seem more appropriate to characterise these and other Muslim states as godless authoritarianism. For secularism refers not only to the separation of church and state but also to social security and guarantees of fundamental rights—elements sorely lacking in Muslim societies. The second chapter deals with politics in Islam. It rightly explains that Islam is a unified system in which religion and politics are blended in a meaningful way to achieve the broad objectives of human life. The author discusses some intellectual trends and movements that took place in the course of Islamic history and affected the nature of polity and Muslim politics. It would have been more fruitful and beneficial had the author discussed the nature and bases of Islamic polity in detail in the light of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*.

The book's utility lies in its exposition of Islamic methodology for the discipline of political science. It points out the weaknesses of the materialistic, rationalistic, Western social science which neglects metaphysical and spiritual aspects of human existence. Islamic methodology rests on divine revelation which, *inter alia*, encourages human beings to reason out the complexities of human life and follow the right path. The author suggests that political science, according to the methodological strategy of Islam, cannot be based on facts alone but rather on an analysis of purpose and meaning that lie behind them, and the forces that shape them.

Another important feature is the lucid description of three orders

of Islam—*sharīah*, the legal order; Ummah, the social order; and *khilāfah*, the political order. *Sharīah* is differentiated from other related terms like law and *fiqh*. It is emphasized that *sharīah* enables human beings to follow *the dīn* of Allah and establish a just, peaceful and prosperous social order. It would be inappropriate, however, to characterise *sharīah* as merely a legal order (pp. 46-62), or a series of orders.

Ummah, the author explains, is a unique organization of human beings related to each other by the strong bonds of divinely ordained doctrine and sharing a common creed. This unity leads to a coherent whole that dispels ignorance and vice. Thus it is mission-oriented, and all those who share it constitute an organic whole. He asserts that the Ummah transcends kinship, race, language and region. To define Ummah as a social order, however, is inappropriate. Social order, it may be noted, is a broad term encompassing the entire gamut of social life. Generally, social order consists of two parts. One, the set of rules according to which parts are related to each other, called system. The other is organization, which denotes structure. Ummah is an organization of individuals and indicates only the form.

The political system of Islam, *khilāfah*, is an instrument to practically apply the Divine Will. The author clarified the meaning of *khilāfah* with the help of terms like *‘ahd* (contract), *amānah* (trust), *itā‘ah* (obedience), and *hukm* (adjudication). These Qur’ānic concepts denote and connote more than just the political aspects of behaviour. The author furthermore elucidates six principles which are considered essential for an Islamic political order: *tawhīd*, *sharīah*, *‘adālah*, *hurriyāh*, *musāwah* and *shūrā*. There is a need to elaborate the system in which these concepts are integrated. The political order is a mechanism to translate these concepts into reality and establish divine order. A comparison between the Western and the Islamic polity is presented which leads to the conclusion that they share little in common. Clearly, Islam and its various subsystems cannot be interpreted through Western lenses. Islamic ideology has its own distinct nature and characteristics designed to establish a just, peaceful and righteous social order. It should be analyzed within its own ideological and intellectual framework.

The author considers Islam and the political order as distinct, and the latter as an "agent" of the former (p. 82). Such a description may lead Muslims to think erroneously that religion and politics are two

separate entities. In fact, Islam is a broad system and political order is one of its sub-systems. Polity is an institution, which works in coordination with other institutions, and helps the system to persist.

The last two chapters discuss the institutions of *muḥāsabah*—the system of accountability, and *nahḍah*: the Islamic movement. *Muḥāsabah* inculcates in Muslims a sense of responsibility to Allah for their worldly activities. This should deter them from behaving impulsively and egoistically. If an incumbent of a position fails to implement this process, the other persons from the Ummah take cognizance of the matter and suggest reform. The role of the legislature, of *ahl al-shūrā*, and grounds and apparatus of impeachment are also discussed but are beyond the scope of *muḥāsabah*. These are forms of checks and balances. Finally the author presents the role of different Islamic movements in reviving the spirit of Islam and revitalizing the Ummah.

On the whole, the book is a useful contribution that will benefit students of political science. It is useful for understanding the nature of Islamic polity and various related issues. It has the potential to stimulate further research and writing.