

reflection, with its characteristic indigenous terminology, and with the deployment of scriptures as sacred archetypes rather than as archaic problems. Christian missiology has long recognised the need to secure such a paradigm shift in Muslim discourse. Attempts to debate with Muslims on Muslim ground, using Muslim categories, have an unnervingly poor record of securing conversions. Modern missionary establishments, nowadays politely wrapped in the veil of “dialogue,” prefer to convert Muslims first to the use of Western Christian terminology and concerns, after which, it is thought, formal conversion will follow naturally. And in Esack's case, the success of this approach is very striking. Given his language, his moral code, his disdain for the “the letter” and preference for the “spirit” (however shallow), Esack has become closer to the New Testament than to the Qur’ān.

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*Max Weber and Islam*, edited by Toby E. Huff and Wolfgang Schluchter. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999. ISBN 1560004002, Pp. 331.

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The book under review is the outcome of a conference that was held in 1984 to consider and analyze Weber's scattered comments on Islam in order to evaluate his theory of religion. It comprises eleven essays, which were presented in the conference by well-known scholars like Ira M. Lapidus, Peter Hardy, Barbara Metcalf, Francis Robinson, S.N. Eisenstadt and others. They elaborate, interpret and evaluate Weber's theses on religion and capitalism with particular reference to Islam. It is an important addition to comparative sociology of religion. Prior to this volume Bryan S. Turner published a book on the same topic which earned appreciation from the academic community.<sup>1</sup> Turner was critical of Weber's interpretation of Islam. He did not find Weber's analysis of Islamic ethics compatible with his analysis of socio-economic structure of Islamic society.<sup>2</sup> To him, Weber's argument about the warrior ethic of Islam is “not an argument about any idealist view of history, but it is, furthermore, not an analysis of elective affinity.”<sup>3</sup>

Max Weber is one of the foremost sociologists of the modern age. His main concern was to study the system of ideas in cross-cultural

and historical setting and the spirit of capitalism. He laid much emphasis on rationalization as an adequate system of norms and values that facilitated the rise of the spirit of capitalism in the West. As such he analyzed “the structures of world’s religions, the various structural components of societies in which they exist that serve to facilitate or impede rationalization and the structural aspect of capitalism and the rest of the modern world.”<sup>4</sup> He adopted comparative and historical frames of reference and analyzed civilizational traits found in major religions of the world to explain the type of rationality that led to the spirit of capitalism. He wrote extensively about Confucianism and Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Ancient Judaism, and Christianity. He made certain remarks about Islam while explaining of his theses about religion, economy and rationalization. The difficulty of Western scholars, in general, and that of Max Weber in particular, was that they measurably failed to understand and appreciate the spirit, doctrine and philosophy that lie behind the apparent structure of Muslim society. Due to their methodological orientation, Western sociologists rely only on apparent facts and do not go deeper to investigate the principles which structure a set of relationship.

Toby E. Huff in his introduction explains the five ingredients of Islam as “(1) prayers five times daily; (2) *shahādah*; (3) fasting; (4) giving of alms to the poor (*zakat*, poor tax); and (5) pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca once during the believer’s life time if at all possible”(p. 3). Actually, in the sequence of these ingredients, *shahādah* comes first. What is more, he neglected the foundation of these ingredients. In fact, the ingredients that follow are the manifestation and affirmation of *shahādah* which establishes the basic doctrine of *al-tawhīd*, which is the “essence”, and “the first determining principle of Islam, its culture and civilization.” It “gives Islamic civilization its identity, which binds all its constituents together and thus makes of them an integral, organic body which we call civilization.”<sup>5</sup>

The other misunderstanding about Islam is that it is treated as a religion as understood in the West, a specific aspect of human behaviour distinct and separate from other aspects. Thus conceived, Durkheim could divide human activities into sacred and profane.<sup>6</sup> The same idea is conveyed by Wolfgang Schluchter who begins his essay as follows:

While working on his comparative and developmental analyses of the major religions, on their relations to the nonreligious—specially the

economic and political orders and powers—Max Weber also took up Islam (p. 53).

It shows that these scholars have not taken an integrated view of life. Max Weber, opposing Karl Marx, states that religious ethic is most important and affects the economic system as it generates such spirit that develops capitalism. Islam is a *din*, a complete system where all aspects of human life are blended into one. The separation of one aspect from the other is against the philosophy and basic doctrine of Islam. In this perspective Weber's thesis is not applicable to Islam and Muslim society.

Weber presented a comparative analysis of oriental and occidental civilizations to prove his thesis of the relationship between religion and economy. Unfortunately, the comparison was made at different levels. At the time of comparison the oriental civilizations were facing degeneration while the occidentals were at the prime of their youth. Indian, Chinese and Islamic civilizations in their heydays developed knowledge, technology and way of life superior to others. Islamic civilization was on the forefront till 12<sup>th</sup> century and made significant contributions to science, technology, trade and commerce. The micro-level analysis of some Muslim groups and individual Muslims show that they were highly involved in economic activities, achieved success in economic enterprises and contributed positively to the national economy. They adopted all the modern means of economic organization necessary to conduct the economic activities and at the same time they also adhered to Islamic values. The contributors to the present volume though express disagreement with Weber's remarks about Islam and his analysis of Muslim society, they indirectly lend support to his theses.

Patricia Crone explains Weber's view that rationality distinguished Europeans from others, because the Europeans systematized and rationalized their cultural system in general and legal system in particular that caused the emergence of capitalism. She explains that rationality "has to do with being rule—bound, regular, systematic, logical, calculating, purposive, controlled by the intellect, secular, impersonal, disenchanting, orientated towards mere *Zweck* as opposed to *Wert* and so forth" (p. 248). Later on she says:

Weber's concept of rationality thus brackets three unrelated characteristics: it is a chimaera made up, like most chimaeras, of real features in unreal combinations. However much of the features may be deemed to have "elective affinity," we need to separate them if we are

to understand how and why European and, say, Islamic law developed so differently (p. 251).

She concludes that Islamic law is unsystematic because it does not allow changes. It may also be characterized as traditional as it does not accommodate the forces of modern society. She also explains:

As Weber himself observes, a high degree of systematization is characteristic of the Romano – German family, Islamic law and other religious systems, but not of English law, the reason for this difference being that the former systems were elaborated by scholars (academic jurists, *fuqahas*, rabbis, priests) whereas the latter was shaped by judges, who tend to regard law more as a craft than as an intellectual enterprise (p. 250).

These statements are contradictory, ambiguous, and unsubstantiated. First, rationality in Weber's thought is confusing. There are no fixed criteria by which one can judge what is rational and what is not. It is purely subjective and depends upon interpretation. Second, Islamic law has all the characteristics of rationality, as conceptualized by Crone, except one, i.e. being secular. Islamic law may even be characterized as secular if it means this worldly orientation. Fourth, it is wrong to say that Islamic law is unable to accommodate changes. This dynamism in Islamic law is made possible through the application of *ijtihad* which is a source of Islamic law after the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAS). Nevertheless, it is true that Islam does not compromise with its basic tenets and fundamental principles. Fifth, Islamic law is based on Qur'an, Sunnah and the objectives of Shari'ah which are more relevant and appropriate in dealing with human affairs than the law made by men. Lastly, according to Crone the difference between the Islamic law and the European law is on the basis of their judicial systems. According to her, Islamic law is based on *Qādi* system while European law on judges who developed it through their interpretations. There is not much difference between the two. In fact the *Qādi* system should be more preferable than the European one because *Qādi* was not only the expert of law but he was also a man of austerity and *taqwā*. As such he had fear of Allah (SWT) and used to pronounce judgement in the best spirit of justice least influenced by sentiment and emotions. In contrast to this, as Pareto observed, the judges are often influenced by sentiments in pronouncing judgement and most of their actions are non-logical.

The frustrating part of the book is Francis Robinson's article: "Secularization, Weber, and Islam" in which he traced the strands of

secularization in Muslim societies particularly of South Asian countries. He cited the examples of Indian subcontinent, and says that Islamic criminal and civil law “was first encroached upon, and then replaced outright, by British code of law” (p. 233). In due course of time the provision of Sharī‘ah were limited to personal law relating to matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The purpose is to state that disenchantment, fragmentation, structural and subjective secularization took place in Muslim societies. He observes:

We can discern fragmentation in at least two senses. There was fragmentation between public and private worlds, between a public world ruled by law derived from the West, and a private world ruled by law derived from Islamic sources. There was also fragmentation between the world of British courts, whether they applied the British codes of public law or the Anglo-Muhammadan personal law, and the world of the *‘ulamā’*, the traditionally learned men of Islam, who strove to offer as full guidance in the ways of Sharī‘ah as they could.

Robinson highlighted the secular views of people like Mushirul Hasan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to buttress his argument. Muslim masses have never endorsed their views and such opinions have remained confined to a very minute percentage of the Muslim population. He even mentions the communist-leaning Progressive Writers Movement advocated by people like K. M. Ashraf and Sajjad Zaheer as an example of secularization of Islamic system. It did not occur to Robinson that such individuals and groups have nothing to do with Islam. They do not show the “emergence of a protestant or puritan Islam”(p. 235). Rather these are the views of people opposed to the ideals and practice of Muslim society and Islam.

Weber’s theory raises a fundamental question. Should capitalism be the only system prescribed for every individual and society? Capitalism, it must be noted, has not yet received the status of a universal norm that all societies should strive to achieve. As far as Islam is concerned, it has its own economic system different from capitalism and socialism. One may find some traits of these two types of economies in Islamic economic system but it is quite different from them. The Islamic system is based on concepts of equity, morality and benefit for humanity rather than upon the capitalistic cut-throat competition and desire for selfish material gain.

Weber’s interpretation of Islam as “warrior religion,” demonstrating “patrimonialism,” “hedonist spirit towards, women, luxuries and property”<sup>7</sup> as well as any justification of these views

(p.139) are misleading and are based upon the distortion of fact and reality. The present volume with additional facts and arguments attempts to justify Weber's theses and views on Islam and Muslim societies. The contributors failed to appreciate and thus highlight the real spirit, philosophy and doctrine of Islam, and Muslims' struggle to manifest that spirit through their thought and action. They relied only on what appears and what people do without analyzing the subjective meaning that lie behind that. It is against Weber's interpretative sociology and contradicts his *verstehan* method.

#### Notes:

1. Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).
2. *Ibid.*, 13.
3. *Ibid.*
4. George Ritzer, *Classical Sociological Theory* (New York: The McGraw-Hill, 1996), 254.
5. Ismā'īl R. al-Fārūqī, *Al-Tawhīd: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herdon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), 17.
6. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology*, translated by J. W. Swain (London: Allen & Unwin, 1915).
7. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 238-9.

**Ethics in International Management** edited by Brij Nino Kumar and Horst Steinmann. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998, ISBN, 3-11-015447-1, Pp. 461.

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Institutionalizing ethical practices in business organization is an arduous task for management under any circumstances, and it becomes especially problematic as corporations move into the international arena. Besides the usual barriers of custom and language, operating in foreign locations also poses another problem of different countries having value systems that vary widely, often leading to ethical norms and beliefs that are at odds with those of the originating Multinational Corporations (MNCs). The book under review deals with these issues.