

definitely find useful as an indispensable companion for continued reference. However, the multiple title of the work needs re-consideration. While the “*Prophetic Niche in the Virtuous City*” is a very catchy title, its correlation with “*the Concept of Hikmah in Early Islamic Thought*” is clumsy. One would expect that the book will be based on the application of *hikmah* in the *Ḥadīth* or *Sunnah*, which the niche or lamp of the Prophet (S.A.W.) represents. Unfortunately this was not given due attention to.

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**The Qur’anic worldview: A springboard for cultural reform. By AbdulHamid AbuSulayman. London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2011, pp. xv+179, ISBN: 978-1-56564-365-9.**

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Misconstruing the actual connotation of the Qur’ānic worldview and how it can be harnessed to rejuvenate the lost glory of the Muslim society has led many writers and readers alike to misplaced priorities. The attempt made by AbdulHamid Abusulayman in this book stands out as a masterpiece. Rigorous research, wealth of experience and interaction with the Islamic and other cultures afforded him the opportunity to distinguish cultural practices from the practical implementation of Qur’ānic injunctions and Sunnatic authorisation.

Unlike other books that overburden their readers with many definitions and instead of convincing them end up confusing them, chapter one (the Qur’anic Worldview and Human Culture) restricts its elucidation of what the Qur’ānic worldview is all about to those values embedded in the primary sources of Islam. One may think that since many Muslims have committed the *surahs* and verses of the Qur’ān to memory, observing and implementing the Qur’ānic worldview becomes easier. The book reminds us that it is easier said than done, as the human instinct always inclines towards what pleases the soul, which at times, may not be in conformity with the dictates of the Qur’ān. In the same vein, there is customarily a wide gulf between people’s heritage

and what individual members of such communities actually practice. It is a common phenomenon to “encounter contradictions between the theoretical premises on which such systems and worldviews are based and the actual practices engaged in by the societies they have helped to form” (p. 1). This explanation exonerates the Qur’ān, and indeed Islam, from any blame as a result of lapses and discrepancies that are so glaringly present among the Muslims today. In other words, backwardness of the Muslims and the disunity existing among them were brought about by their departure from the correct way of implementing the Qur’ānic worldview, which supposedly could have served as an avenue for reaching their aspirations. On the distortion of the Qur’ānic worldview, which had predicted the sorry state of the *ummah* today, the book identifies self-negation, which paved the way for the inferiority complex among the Muslims and their elites.

The purported dichotomy between reason and revelation also receives reasonable attention. The book dismisses the so-called discordance between the two, and maintains that since both of them originated from the same source; it is, therefore, illogical to have any tangible discrepancy between them. The author, however, argues that the imaginary inconsistency between them is a result of the negative influence of the Greek formal logic on the Muslims. He thereby sounds a warning that “until we realise the destructive impact this fallacy has had on Islamic thought and civilisation, the Muslim community will never be able to regain its unity, its vision, its motivation, its pioneering spirit, or its scientific and cultural edge” (p. 16). On the monstrous insecurity that is bedevilling humanity today, the book reiterates that world peace is of paramount importance to the Qur’ānic worldview, and without which no meaningful development can be realised. That is why the Qur’ān categorically lambasts the primitive way of narrow mindedness and condemns racism and tribalistic mindset. It assures that the Qur’ānic message, “is capable of guiding humanity by instilling within them those values and principles that are conducive to true security and peace” (p. 56).

The universal values embedded in the Qur’ānic worldview, which include, but are not limited to, monotheism, divinely-given stewardship, justice, freedom, responsibility, morality, and mutual consultation are the main discourse of chapter two of the book. By explicating these principles, readers, especially non-Muslims would be forearmed that,

“these values and principles represent the fundamental, essential building blocks by means of which the Qur’anic worldview is manifested on the practical level” (p. 73). The readers are also forewarned that whoever calls to anything contrary to them could be seen as someone who deliberately wants to smear Islam and he does not want to kowtow to its teachings.

After availing its readers the opportunity of having the details of what the Qur’ānic worldview is all about, chapter three and four focus on the roadmap to building a sustainable worldview capable of inspiring, reforming and returning the *ummah* once again to the leadership role it once enjoyed in all facets of human endeavour. The author maintains that the *ummah* needs to retrace its steps and return to the worldview cherished by its predecessors. In the heyday of Islam, he argues, despite limited resources at their disposal and unavailability of machineries and heavy-duty equipment, they were able to achieve the feat our digitalised world is still struggling to match. The materialistic tendency, which is alien to what the Qur’ān teaches and preaches, should be abandoned. This foreign worldview, “has adopted a materialistic orientation which has instilled in it the same lifeless, amoral qualities...” (p. 117). A worldview that relegates religion to the background and restricts it to individual affairs is the antithesis of the Qur’ānic worldview that catapulted the earlier Muslim societies to enviable achievements that were second to none. It is, however, noteworthy that in spite of its inclination to worldly affairs, “modern materialistic civilisation has achieved great things, thanks to its commitment to the systematic, law-governed method of scientific inquiry, which constitutes one of the requirements for the task of being God’s stewards and representatives on earth” (p. 120). This implies that for any aspiration to materialise, the person or group of persons in question have to expend the required efforts and take all necessary precautions, and, above all, play by the rules. In this way, our predecessors were determined to succeed in anything they laid their hands on. They did their own part and sought divine intervention in what was beyond their capability. The reverse is the case among some Muslims of today; they expect everything to be automatic without lifting a finger! In other words, all hands must be on deck.

The Islamic worldview is a humanitarian, ethical, and moral consciousness worldview. While striving to attain giant strides and

reclaim their rightful position among world communities, Muslims are reminded that ethics and morality should go hand in hand in pursuit of their goals. As such, the relationship between them and other members of the public should be cordial and should be built on mutual respect, irrespective of their religious inclination. That is, the worldview enjoined by the Qur'ān is the one established on, "the brotherhood of all humanity... and social responsibility to live purposefully" (p. 123).

The concluding part of the book (Chapter Five) showcases some of the practical steps being embarked upon by some Muslim intellectuals – in which the author is an arrowhead – to realise the dream of regaining the lost glory of the *ummah*. The efforts include the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), which has been at the forefront of formulating all-round curricula that are flexible, sustainable, and comprehensive for the younger generation. The brand of curriculum that is obtainable at the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) is a typical example of the good work the IIIT is doing around the world, which deserves commendation and appreciation.

The book focuses on the Muslim intellectuals and challenges them to swing into action and look for ways of transforming their theoretical vision to practical reality for the betterment of the *ummah* and humanity. The role of the political leadership of the *ummah* however received little or no attention, which is a vacuum. Expectedly, their role in the "struggle" ought to have been spelt out. I think they are also among the major stakeholders in the futuristic well-being of the *ummah*.

Through meticulous analyses, the book seems to have achieved its objectives by itemising how Muslims lost track of the Qur'ānic worldview that guided their predecessors, and proposed practicable methodology by which such worldview can be once again imbibed by the Muslims for reconstruction. Due to the burning issues addressed by the book, researchers and students of Islamic studies, comparative religion, sociology, and ethics would find it relevant to their inquest. Members of the public, irrespective of their areas of specialisation, also stand to benefit immensely from this humble contribution by AbdulHamid AbuSulayman.

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