

Introduction

Modern Islamic Political Thought; Hamid Enayet, Macmillon Press Ltd., London and Basingstoke, 1982

This book is much talked about in the circles interested in the Islamic studies because of its subject. Hamid Enayet is one of the few Iranian writers known outside Iran. He was a professor of political science at Tehran University from 1971 to. 76.

He had also served at Khartoum University, Sudan, and St. Antony College, England. He lectured on modern Middle Eastern history at Oxford University. His untimely death grieved the academic circles, for he was expected to do more valuable work in the field of Islamic political thought.

He is among a small coterie of scholars who are well versed in Western modes of thought and idiom with good knowledge of Arabic and Persian. His first book *Sayri dar andishah ye siyasi `Arab* was acclaimed as the best on the subject all over Persian knowing world and secured him a place of eminence in the Muslim academic circles.

He translated Aristotle's *Politics* and Hegel's *Reason in History* into Persian along with many other books and articles. He contributed articles to Persian papers and journals besides writing dissertations on political and ideological trends in English. He seems to have a wide circle of friends and admirers in Iran.

Many letters that we received from his fans who defended him against adverse reviews published in Iranian and foreign journals showed that he enjoyed popularity among both the students and teachers. *Modern Islamic Political Thought* attracted much attention all over the world, for it dealt with a subject of burning interest, i.e. political thinking in the Muslim world.

His relation to Iran made the book more important. This is the first book which gives an authentic account of Shi'i thought regarding politics. All the books written so far have dealt with one aspect of Islamic thought only, i.e. the majority Sunni view. The Shi'i outlook was ignored both by the Muslim and Western scholars. Hamid Enayet compared and contrasted the Shi'i views on state and politics with those of Sunnis, both in historical perspective and the contemporary situation.

The book consists of five chapters and one long introduction dealing with the relevance of the past. The

first chapter, under the title "Shi'ism and Sunnism: Conflict and Concord," explains the spirit of Shi'ism and gives a separate account of Shi'i-Sunni polemics. The second chapter throws light on the controversy over the caliphate, with particular reference to Turkish caliphate. The concept of the Islamic state is discussed in the third chapter under two headings: "Muhammad Rashid Rida and fundamentalism".

The fourth chapter takes into account the development and impact of the concepts of nationalism, democracy, and socialism in the Muslim world. The fifth chapter is exclusively devoted to aspects of Shi'i modernism with special reference to the movement of constitutionalism in Iran and the notions of *taqiyyah* and martyrdom.

The discussions about the Shi'i milieu and its role in moulding special Shi'i concepts assume greater importance due to the Islamic Revolution of Iran and its influence on the contemporary Muslim world. Just a glance at the contents of the book is enough to realize its academic value.

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