

Book Review

Islam, the Bastion of Human Rights translation of Urdu book “**Islam Insani Haqooq Ka Pasban**” by Moulana Syed Jalaluddin Umari, Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, New Delhi, 2017.

The present book by the author is originally in Urdu and is available in a number of Indian languages as well; its English translation is being done by a well known researcher Prof. Dr. Mohammad Rafat. The theme of book is an exposition of the Islamic perspective on human rights. Islam has the distinction of combining the twin features of authenticity and relevance in its system of thought and action. On the one hand, Islam means the authentic and comprehensive guidance provided by Almighty to mankind; while on the other hand, Islam addresses the acute problems of human society; providing principled approach to arriving at feasible solutions; in a spatio temporal matrix which itself may be changing. The author in his research oriented approach has kept himself tuned to this marvelous nature of Islam; where man’s spiritual quest for highest realities coexists with and indeed supports the proper development of his individual and social personality. The author dispels the notion that human rights arose from historical development in the post Renaissance Europe. It is true that the world today is familiar with the conceptions articulated in the west because western wisdom and power dominate the world scene.

The writer has elucidated human rights and their backdrop in a highly academic manner and presented Islamic teachings in this regard in great detail. The author has compiled a comprehensive list of human rights and quoted the relevant Quranic verses as well as the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) to establish their legal status.

The book consists of nine chapters the author summarizes the historical and conceptual background of the subject and presents the basic rights in the first three chapters. Then he turns his attention towards specific issues whose importance demands their separate analysis. Accordingly the next chapter is about basic needs of human beings. Today’s welfare state has recognized human needs in principle but Islamic conception is much wider and richer in scope. Thus the needs of food, clothing, shelter and transport are recognized as basic.

Chapter five develops the theoretical frame work further to introduce the category of social rights. They include freedom of thought and expression. Everyone has right to establish a family to lead a fulfilling conjugal life. Islam respects privacy of people and does not permit undue interference in private life.

The last four chapters of the book focus on areas often neglected in usual discourse on human rights. Thus two chapters describe the rights of the weak and the handicapped; the reader may be amazed to learn about the remarkable sensitivity shown by Islam towards

protection of rights of the weak. The next chapter is on the right of defence; if attacked, an individual is fully authorized by Islam to defend his life, honour, wealth and kin. The book concludes with a chapter on religious freedom. Islam does not permit coercion in matters of religion and belief. Rather it promotes an atmosphere, in which people may exercise their thinking faculty, listen to various views and arrive at the truth.

The present book is a valuable step to familiarize people with Islam, its worldview, ethical system, doctrines and prescriptions. So we recommend that Islamic conception of human rights be carefully studied by all those who wish to restore human dignity in practice and establish justice on earth.

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