

The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography

By Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad et al. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 1991, 230 pp.

This book is the twentieth volume to appear in the Bibliographies and Indexes in Religious Studies series published by Greenwood Press. It is divided into two parts: a) the introductory chapters, and b) the main body of the bibliography and the indexes. The three introductory chapters give an overview of contemporary Islamic revivalist movements from somewhat different perspectives and address many critical issues that are difficult to deal with adequately in just three chapters.

Chapter one discusses such issues as the factors behind the growth of revivalist movements, fundamental issues that provide the primary focus for revivalist writings, the bias of scholars in the West who write and conduct research on Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, and the establishment of Shari'ah schools in Muslim countries. However, this chapter contains many less-than-authentic statements or, in other words, some methodological misinformation. For example, the author refers to *al 'Arabī* and *al Muslim al Mu'āṣir* as "two Kuwaiti magazines" that tried to promote an intellectual controversy on "whether the companions of the Prophet Muhammad were leftist or rightist and whether the sources of the formative period of Islam can be subjected to modern re-interpretation to justify claims of Islamic precedent to proponents of 'Islamic left' and 'Islamic right'" (p. 5). The author does not document the reasons for this conclusion, in spite of the fact that the two magazines are different both in their natures and their contents. *Al 'Arabī* is a monthly magazine that discusses current issues for a wide public in the Arab world, whereas *al Muslim al Mu'āṣir* is a quarterly publication that contains various types of articles related to the Islamization of knowledge.

The author of this chapter has attempted to cover a variety of historical, political, and socioeconomic issues. Unfortunately, the attempt is marred by its inconsistency. For instance, English literature on contemporary Islamic revivalism, the use of modern media for the dissemination of Islamic literature, and the status and role of Muslim women were discussed twice in different parts of the chapter. Many critical terms appear without satisfactory justification: "terrorists," "zealots," "militants,"

"fundamentalists," and "extremists" all appear out of context. It seems that the author has tried to put too much information into this relatively short chapter, thus making the text somewhat inconsistent, superficial, uncritical, and confusing. As a result, the reader may not be too sure about what type of literature is to be covered in the bibliography.

Chapter two deals with several concepts representing various aspects of contemporary Islamic revivalist movements and used by those involved in the discourse of resurgence. Three types of conceptual developments experienced by Islamic revivalist movements in the contemporary world are discussed: a) traditional concepts used by contemporary Islamic revivalism, viz., *tajdīd* (regeneration), *takfīr* (condemnation), and *jihād* (striving); b) transformation of older concepts into terms of special significance in the modern context, viz., *jāhiliyah* (ignorance) and *tawhīd* (oneness of God); and c) the development of new concepts arising out of certain conditions, viz., *dīmuqrāṭīyah* (democracy) and *uṣūliyah* (Islamic fundamentalism). These concepts represent the ideological bedrock for Muslim revivalists and are also widely used by Western writers. The analysis is very consistent, precise, and adequate. The author seems to have a clear understanding of the subject and the literature to be covered in the bibliography, for he says that "these concepts become the foundation for a new discourse that is significantly both Islamic and modern. This new discourse is the heart of the literature of the contemporary resurgence" (p. 33).

Chapter three furnishes the reader with the historical background of the emergence of the revivalist movements. Two major organizations are emphasized: *al Ikhwān al Muslimūn* and *Jama'at-i-Islami*. Many other movements have also been referred to sparingly. One could get quite confused in going through the treatment of so many critical issues in such a short space. For instance, the Iranian revolution, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Chinese-Malay communal riots in Malaysia, the Shi'i Muslim-Christian conflict in Lebanon, and the Pakistan-Bangladesh civil war in 1971 have all been dealt with in a few sentences.

Moreover, the theological basis, structure, and activities of Islamic movements are covered in a confused manner. While a great deal of attention is paid to Islamic parties in Egypt, Lebanon, and Malaysia, other important Islamic parties in Sudan, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are ignored or omitted. In addition, the criteria used in choosing these countries is not stated. In other words, the chapter focuses upon broad subjects but offers only a superficial analysis. The chapter's main point tends to be lost among the large number of controversial issues into which the writer digresses. Most importantly, the chapter fails to define the relevant bibliographical sources.

These three chapters contain overlapping information and are much lengthier than one would expect for any bibliographic compilation. It would have been much better if the three authors had collectively produced one chapter with the intent of specifying the domain of their bibliography rather than delving into incomplete and superfluous analyses of such critical subjects.

The bibliographic part contains 1,225 entries of English-language material published on the subject of contemporary Islamic revivalism during the period 1970-1988. Some entries dealing with Muslim minorities and the development of Islamic institutions in the West have also been included, and some subjects which are "crucial areas in need of Islamization" have also been given special consideration under "General Studies." Entries are classified according to geographical regions, with subdivisions arranged by countries. Countries are selected by determining the availability of literature.

Material under "General Studies" is divided into three main classes: a) that which is not specifically classified has been placed under the general heading of "Interpretive Studies"; b) "Economics"; and c) "Women." One fails to understand the reason for selecting two disciplines and leaving out such important areas as education and media, which are considered equally important to the subject of Islamic revivalism. Moreover, very few titles are included under "Economics" and "Women," and again the relevant criteria were not explained, although many extensive bibliographies have been compiled in each of these disciplines.

On the other hand, the relationship of many other titles to the literature on Islamic revivalism, (i.e., entry 0321, AL-QADHAFI, MUAMMAR, *The Green Book*, Tripoli), is questionable. The number of entries on revivalism, excluding the "General Studies" section, is 922, with some two hundred entries located under Egypt, Pakistan, and Iran which were previously included in Asaf Hussain's bibliography of *Islamic Movements in Egypt, Pakistan and Iran* (Mansell, 1983). A few of the other entries cited under Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are found in the *Index of Islamic Literature* supplement to the *Muslim World Book Index* (The Islamic Foundation, UK and IIT, Herndon, VA) under "Islamic Movements and Revival," "Islamic Thought and Institutions," and "Contemporary Muslim Ummah." This leaves the original contribution of this volume questionable.

It seems that the compilers are not very clear about the bibliography's exact purpose. This is obvious from their statement: "Given the fact that much of the material contained in this bibliography is not available in such places as *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* or *Index Islamicus*, the editors chose to forego fuller annotation for the purpose of

providing as many substantive references as possible. While this inclusiveness allows for some overlap in subject matter, the intent is to provide the reader access to as much written material as possible on any given subject" (p. x). Technically speaking, this bibliography does not maintain certain standards. For instance, sources dealing with bibliographic and biographic data were not given a special section, as is the practice in any bibliographical compilation. Many entries are briefly annotated while others list only the title. The compilers claim that annotations are provided only for unclear titles, but many others have been left out. Many materials published before 1970 or after 1988 have been included with no justification, despite the fact that the authors claimed that only literature of the period 1970-1988 was to be included.

More seriously, there is some confusion in some of the citations. For instance, in entry 0910, the reference was to ALLAH, A. while the author is listed as COBBAN, H. The three indexes provided at the end of the bibliography are not professionally compiled. For instance, the name AGBETOLA, A. S. is not included in the author index even though it appears under entry 0838. Furthermore, different entries have been used for the same author, as these appeared in titles of the literature, causing dispersion of information without cross-references. Some notable examples are: MAUDUDI, ABUL A'LA and MAWDUDI, SAYYID ABUL A'LA, as well as KOTB, SAYYED and QUTB, SAYYID. The title index has used both the entry number and page number, a technique that is confusing to the user. The subject index, unlike the author and the title indexes, has been provided with some explanation for the use of italics, page numbers, and entries. Cross-references have also been provided. Yet the use of semicolons to separate page numbers from entry numbers is inappropriate for compiling a useful index.

The authors-compilers are recognized scholars of Islamic revivalism. The bibliography compiled by them was a result of their keen interest in the subject, but this alone may not be enough to compile a bibliography which requires adherence to some professional or technical standards to accomplish such a work.

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