BOOK REVIEWS

Maryam Jameelah, ISLAM AND MODERNISM; Muhammad Yusuf Khan, Santnagar, Lahore, 1966; pp. vi, 166; Price, Rs. 12.

This collection of essays appears to enjoy the official blessings of the Jamā‘at-i-Islāmī; the Amir of its West Pakistan branch has nicely introduced the author and her work in a brief preface. The learned Amir refers to the interpreting of the Qur‘ān and the Sunnah “in their strict literal (italics not ours) sense.” We wonder if this Neo-Zāhirism has any relation with the official creed of the Jamā‘at.

Maryam Jameelah, the author of the book under review, is an American-born convert of New York. She had embraced Islam “after many years of deep thought and study” in 1961. She migrated from America a few years ago to Pakistan “under the personal responsibility of Sayyid Maulana Abu Ala Mawdoodi,” and is living with her Pakistani husband, the publisher of the book at Lahore. Since her migration to Pakistan, she has written a number of articles on Islam. Her present work seems to be a logical continuation of her earlier book, entitled: Islam versus the West. She writes on Islam with a great missionary zeal.

In the present volume as in the earlier, the author launched a frontal attack against both the Western orientalists and the Muslim reformists who have been pleading for the modern interpretation of Islam as the only means by which Islam can continue to be a living force in Muslim lands. Her deep-seated hatred for all that is Western is writ large throughout the whole book. On the very first page in place of dedication, she writes, “This work is intended for European and American scholars of Islam and their disciples in Muslim lands.” In the first 27 pages, she briefly summarizes her views on Westernism and Modernism. Under the caption “The Philosophical Sources of Western materialism” she briefly traces the history of secularism since early Greek age to the advent of modern era. The European Middle Ages constitute a period of interregnum in the evolution of secular ideal due to the influence of the Church. She recounts the views of Machiavelli, Francis Bacon, Descartes, Newton, Diderot, Rousseau, Darwin, Freud, Marx, Russel, and Schopenhauer as the founders of modern materialistic philosophy. This philosophy according to her is founded on the categorical rejection of religion. On page 14, she observes, “Modernism is a militant revolt against religion and all the spiritual values it represents.” She likens “modernism” with “the malignant cancer” which originating from Western Europe has “invaded virtually every country in the world destroying the indigenous cultures of Asia.” This modernism according to her “appears under the guise of many different labels—Communism, Socialism, Capitalism, Pragmatism, Positivism, Fascism, Nazism, Zionism, Kemalism and Arab nationalism.” She concludes in the same strain of thought, “Western civilization is evil in theory as well as in practice.” She seems to be almost convinced that it is futile to attempt any reconciliation of Islam with modernism, and exhorts Muslims not to “move along
with the trend of time" but fight against it. For this reason alone, she attacks the Muslim modernists with all her emotional fervour. In order to prove her contention that the Muslim modernists are inspired by the Christian missions and foreign imperialism, she cites quotations from the writings of the Western orientalists who have whole-heartedly welcomed the movement of modernism in Islam.

In the following pages of the book, the author uses her pen as a cudgel to indulge in sadistic criticism against all Muslim reformers. Her first victim is Ameer Ali's *The Spirit of Islam* which is dismissed merely as a defence of "modern Western ideals under the thin disguise of Muslim names" (p. 39). Next she chooses a recent publication of A. A. A. Fyzee entitled: *A Modern Approach to Islam*. Similarly she discards all attempts of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Ziya Gokalp, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, Rashid Ridâ, Tabâ Husayn, Shaykh Khalid Muhammad Khalid to re-interpret Islam in the modern context as anti-Islamic. In her enthusiasm, she has not spared anyone.

After having survived author's crusade against the modernists, an objective reader would get an impression that the author has understood neither Islam nor modernism. With due deference to her convictions, it may be submitted that she almost commits the same mistake which is generally committed by the Western orientalists who confuse between "westernisation" and "modernisation". The Muslim reformists have generally attempted to prove that Islam is not opposed to modern science and technology. Science and technology are the by-products of historical forces, and the West has been only the historical locus rather than the permanent abode of science. It may be submitted that in fact the employment of science and technology helps a modern man to fulfil his duties towards God as well as the society in a much more effective and efficient manner than he could do in the bygone ages. The implementation of the Qur'anic commands and the Sunnah of the Prophet is rendered easier by science and technology. To give only a few examples, one may cite the use of the microphone for the call for the prayers ('adhân) which goes a long way to fulfil the divine will. Similarly, there is a tradition of the Prophet that if some one goes to another's house, he should knock the door by hand before entering into the house. The modernists would maintain that today the use of buzzer or electric bell is more efficient method of informing the inmates of the apartments in modern skyscrapers than "knocking the door by hand". The question arises as to what we mean by Islam. "is it a code of norms, ideals and values" meant for all times or merely "a code of formal behaviour" in every walk of life? Is the latter also binding for all ages? The modernists would maintain that Islam is a code of norms and ideals rather than merely a code of "rituals and forms", and by modernism, they simply mean that in modern age, there is no harm if science and technology are harnessed by Muslims to build an ideal Islamic society. Whereas the Islamic ideals remain intact, the modes of implementation may change according to the progress of human thought. Now if the author calls upon the Muslims to give up the pursuit of science and technology since they are antithetical to Islam, she is mistaken and she is only pleading for maintaining the social status quo in the Muslim countries. If she has in her mind a conception of Islam according to which it is merely a spiritual religion having nothing to do with this material world, and since according to her it is opposed to materialism,
she could not understand the true meaning of Islam. It may be submitted that Islam is not opposed to materialism, as it aims to promote the material as well as spiritual well-being of the believers. (في الدنيا حسنة وفي الآخرة حسنة) It enjoins the Muslims to build a happy and prosperous society; however, Islam lays down a code of moral principles within the framework of which it calls upon the believers to work for a better life. Islam does not prohibit its growth, it simply enjoins the limits within which it can be attained. The wealth can be acquired but only through honest means, and it can be used but in such a way that it does not harm others in the society. The weakness of Western materialism flows from the fact that it is independent of any moral imperatives.

The book is by no means a research work. Its virtues are those of an emotional, evocative, and authoritarian work based on effervescent, sincere and a priori judgements. In the past the Western orientalists in their militant attack on Islam had put the Muslim thinkers on a defensive approach. Conversely and as a reaction to it, the approach of the author is to put the Muslims on the offensive against the onslaught of Westernism and Modernism. To this reviewer it appears that the question is not how far can we reconcile Islam with the philosophical postulates of the Western civilization, or even with science and technology, but the crux of the matter is simply whether it is possible for the Muslims to be good Muslims by utilizing science and technology.

It is well-printed, well-bound and nicely got up. The frontispiece is an eloquent representation of the anguished spirit of the book.

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C. A. Qader (Editor), THE WORLD OF PHILOSOPHY: Studies prepared in honour of Prof. M. M. Sharif; published by Sharif Presentation Volume Committee, Lahore; distributed by Pakistan Philosophical Congress, pages 367; Price Rs. 30.

Cloistered in a wreath of definite norms, a Presentation Volume has a sacrosanct character, through which the academic fraternity pays tributes to an illustrious scholar, towards the closing years of his life, for his age-long devotion and contribution of distinction to research and learning. Professor Sharif died on the 11th of November 1965. Just seven months before his death on March 14, 1965, during the twelfth session of the Pakistan Philosophical Congress, this volume, The World of Philosophy was presented to him in a solemn ceremony held in the Senate Hall of the University of the Panjab, Lahore. The Volume contains a lucid biographical introduction of Professor Sharif and his thought (pp. V to XIX) by Prof. B. A. Dar and twentyfour articles (pp. 9—353), especially written for the occasion. Herbert W. Scheneider (U.S.A.), D. M. Datta (Patna, India), Paul A. Schilpp (U.S.A.), F. J. Rintellin (West Germany), T. M. P. Mahadevan (Madras, India), Hossein Nasr (Iran) and John Vaizey (U. K.) joined their Pakistani counterparts to pay homage to Professor Sharif and contribute studies in his honour for the Presentation Volume.