In this book Dr. Abdul Rauf attempts to survey the growth of Islamic influence in the over-all life of Pakistan. In the Introduction the author claims that the Pakistan movement was propelled by a tremendous passion for the renaissance of Islamic culture and civilization. He further says that the process of regeneration has been going on ever since the day Pakistan emerged as a sovereign Muslim state. This latter statement can only command qualified assent from many quarters, because a large number of people remain dissatisfied with the lack of seriousness that prevails in the country with respect to the ideals enunciated by our leadership at the time of the Pakistan movement. However, few will doubt that the emergence of Pakistan has provided the freedom and opportunity necessary for the implementation of those ideals. The future alone will show whether this opportunity has been well utilized.

The first three chapters of the book deal with the origin and growth of Islamic civilization, the spirit and contents of Islamic culture and the Islamic origin of Western sciences and culture. The author has undertaken great pains to put before the reader the relevant material available in this regard. Quotations from innumerable authorities have been given by the author in support of his theses. However, the reviewer feels that the six items mentioned by the author under the head: Salient Features of Islamic Culture should have been discussed in detail and their implications should have been more fully brought out. For example, while, it is true that tawhid implies the unity, dignity and equality of mankind, it also teaches us to do something more than merely extend theoretical recognition to the fact that all men are equal in the sight of God. To be truly effective, tawhid must impel us to remove, as far as possible, social and economic disparities so that no man is allowed to feel that he belongs to an inferior race of beings. For the same reason, the author's statement on p. 29 of the book that in the Islamic pattern of society, “distinctions of caste, creed, colour, financial status etc., get no recognition,” is not likely to be accepted by a neutral observer. True, the caste system as observed by the Hindu society does not exist among the Muslims but economic and social castes of a different type have developed amongst us on the pattern of Western society, and financial status counts for a great deal in the affairs of the Muslims. Similarly, the author's remark about Ijtihad that “the introduction of such a creative principle in Islam has added further to its adaptability” ignores the plain historical fact that since many centuries, Muslim society has ceased to exercise Ijtihad and this has brought about all-round stagnation.

The fourth chapter deals with the evolution of Islamic culture in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and gives a history of the various political and intellectual movements, started by the Muslims of the subcontinent after the advent of the British which culminated in the birth of the Pakistan movement led by the Qa'id-i-A'zam.

The rest of the book deals with the contemporary cultural situation in Pakistan and the efforts being made by various government and non-government
agencies to implement the ideals of the Pakistan movement. The author has done well to remove the impression entertained in some quarters that Pakistan is a theocracy. The chapters on the Cultural Role of the Mosque and Religious Instruction in the Schools and Colleges are well-written and contain much information not easily available to the layman. They show that Pakistan is, after all, progressing Islamically, even though the pace of progress may not satisfy a large majority of people. In the chapter on specialized cultural institutions, the author discusses in some detail the work being done by the Islamic Research Institute, Karachi, the Islamic Academy, Dacca, the Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore and other agencies of a similar kind. In this chapter there is also a good deal of information on the work being done by the Awqāf Department. Finally, there is a chapter on how Pakistan is practising Islamic ideals in which the author discusses, among other topics, the liberal treatment of minorities in Pakistan. This is a matter in which we can legitimately take pride. In this respect, Pakistan has established its superiority over secular India where Hindu revivalism is trying to suppress every trace of cultural diversity and is imposing on the minorities a uniform pattern of Hindu culture. However, when the author says that concentration of wealth is forbidden in Islam and speaks of the attempts being made in Pakistan to put zakāh collections on a systematic basis, one cannot but feel that progress in this respect is much slower than what one would expect from the followers of the Qur'ān.

On the whole, the book is very informative and has been ably written. For the students of Islamic culture, whether or not they may be interested in Pakistan, the first three chapters provide illuminating material. For those who are interested in the contemporary culture of Pakistan, the rest of the book will form interesting and informative reading. The price of the book (Rupees twenty) is rather high and might well prevent many potential readers from purchasing it.

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