Before Lawrence offers his final thoughts in his epilogue in which he categorically states that “it is indeed impossible to imagine Islam without the Qur’an” (p. 193), he discusses how ‘AIDS Victims and Sick Women: (use the) Qur’an as Prescription for Mercy’ (pp. 184–192). He refers to the Indonesian based and Sufi oriented Barzakh Foundation that makes ample use of Qur’anic formulae, a fairly age-old practice employed by Muslim diviners/healers in Muslim communities, to assist and help cure those who suffer from HIV/AIDS and other related diseases. In this final chapter, the author expressively shows how the Qur’an is being invoked by those who do not regard themselves on par with Qur’anic commentators but who see themselves as individuals who possess significant healing powers inspired and influenced by the Qur’an which is viewed in many circles as a shifâ (cure).

Lawrence’s biography of the Qur’an, which adopts a flowing and pleasing style, is an easy and delightful read. Even though we would have preferred it to appear in a series on ‘sacred texts that shook (and continues to shake) the world’ since we are of the firm opinion that it cannot be compared to either Das Kapital or Origins of Species, it has offered an insightful account of aspects and issues that have either been glossed over or basically ignored in other texts covering the same theme.

Muhammed Haron


After a long period of gestation, the editor, professor of psychology at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania, produced this book on one of the most burning issues of the ummah: how to keep the family together (and on the road to salvation), and that in a Western secular environment?

Relationships in Islam.” My own contribution, “Women: Identical or Similar?” was copied from *Religion on the Rise: Islam in the Third Millennium*.1

The editor himself with four articles, “Preface: A Peek into the Mind of Muslim Youths;” “Family Issues of the Western Culture;” “Identity Conflict for Muslims in the West,” cover 55% of the book.

The very best entry beyond any doubt is by Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood (Hull). Hers is a magisterial exposition of all relevant aspects of family and marriage. Indeed, she shows great female wisdom, clinical realism, and the honesty of an experienced lover, even when dealing with details of licit and illicit sexual practices and when tackling questions like “How often?” or “From behind?” In the process she discusses matters which could feed pornography. But this does not happen because it is obvious that she seriously fulfils a pressing need, all too long suppressed by silence on the part of all concerned, parents, teachers, and *imams* included. Her chapter should have opened the book rather than concluding it.

As Professor of Sociology at State University of New York Ba-Yunus statistically proves that the divorce rate in Muslim countries (Pakistan and Malaysia: 5%; Saudi Arabia: 7%) is significantly lower than in India and the Catholic Philippines (15%), not to speak of the United States (50%). This comes as a surprise to those who assume that the mundane (non-sacramental non-religious) nature of marriage in Islam would provoke a high divorce rate and that the easy availability of rather formless divorce under Islamic law would increase such a trend.

Yet—with a shock to his Muslim readers—Ba-Yunus also shows that among immigrant Muslims in the US the divorce rate has risen drastically to 32% during the last decade. Indeed, the least stable seem to be the arranged marriages between now typically independent America-born Muslim girls and “imported” husbands from Eastern Macho cultures of masculinity, prominently including Pakistan.

In her largely field study Fatima Grimm (Hamburg) presents a structured series of interviews with 24 Muslim women in Germany, carefully avoiding too general conclusions. Among her findings is a tendency of immigrant Muslim men not to accept German women converts to Islam as genuine Muslims. Such unfair treatment reaches a peak, of course, when German Muslim women are simply used by citizenship hunting immigrant Muslims, only to be dropped when this aim has been reached.

Grimm’s findings are depressing, also because it indicates the misery of Muslim women in Germany, immigrant or not, is no less than the general

---

upheaval and tragedy among non-Muslim families in the country.

Taha Jabir al-‘Alwani (IIIT), President of the American Graduate School of Islamic Social Sciences, in an interview with Akhtar distinguishes between “two versions of Islam.” The basic, eternal Ibrahimic message and every new generation’s attempt to apply Islam, stripped of its traditional jurisprudence. Says he: “Qur’an and Sunnah make the text. We need to extract from them the purposes (al-maqāṣid).”

Al-‘Alwani makes fun of the Muslim preoccupation with petty “Ḥalāl and Hilāl” issues in which “Muslims in America get drowned” while leaving more important issues untackled (p. 121). He also opposes the shipping back of Muslim corpses for burial in their countries of origin since this practice amounted to an insult to the country of choice.

Alas, the editor’s own contributions are below standard. His opening article, likely to scare people off from the rest of the book, rambles on like a sloppy psychiatrist’s protocol, a hastily taped treasure of banalities (pp. 1–8). The author neither makes a case subsequently supported by examples, nor does he list cases in order to deduce a theory from them.

His second, happily more analytical article title, deals with the impact of four factors on Muslim courtship in America: individualism (including feminism); market-oriented competitiveness; unrealistic romanticism, and consumerist hedonism.

His third entry, focusing on Muslim identity in America, is academically Akhtar’s best here. But without admitting it and without deleting the evidence of it (references to pages of another publication) this chapter was not tailor-made but lifted. The “new” suggestions made here for Muslim integration in the Occident (rather than assimilation, marginalisation or segregation) had frequently been made before and by more important others like Muhammad Asad (d. 1413/1992), Fazlur Rahman (d. 1408/1988), Ismail al-Faruqi (d. 1406/1986), Hassan al-Turabi, and Tariq Ramadan: To distinguish between negotiable cultural/ethnic Islam (green zone) and the non-disposable core of Islam as a world religion (red zone).

The book’s biggest problem is editing, marred as it is by hundreds of printing and lay-out-mistakes and other gross formal oddities. Thus the editor introduces his own articles with “Editor’s Notes.” For my article the entire annex is missing although 47 footnotes refer to it. In some places, whole sub-clauses go missing (as on p. 26) and corrupted words, like “Attar” (for Atatürk) remain undetected (p. 24). I never encountered such formal sloppiness except in some books imported from certain places in South Asia.

Murad Wilfried Hofmann