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DANIEL HAQIQATJOU'S CRITIQUE OF MODERNISM

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Islam claims to be one true religion transcending culture and history. The heart of the Islamic attitude appeals to eternal truth proclaimed by the Sustainer of the universe. Of course, this claim challenges all religions and worldviews, including Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Atheism, Agnosticism, and present-day liberalism. Despite the fact that these Islamic theological claims are filled with supranaturalistic and metaphysical elements, they remain unchanged for a hundred years. The primary reason for this is Islamic traditionalism and isolation from Western civilization.

But today things have sharply changed. Islam is no longer a religion of a specific region and community. What's more, Islam in the West is now reputed to be the fastest-growing religion. Muslims are involved in Western politics, education, religious dialogue, economics, IT, etc. Yet present Western culture is a product of Enlightenment, which introduced an age of reason and the separation of church from the state that has now permeated the whole Western attitude. According to Modernism, theology is not a credible source of genuine knowledge and must give way to science. Given this fact, the question arises: is there a way of reconciliation of Islam and Modernism? There has been much speculation and debate among Muslim theologians concerning the challenge of Modernism. So-called Muslim modernists advocate positive cooperation with Modernism. Another reaction comes from the conservative wing of Islam, pointing out the impossibility of reconciliation between Islam with Modernism.

Daniel Haqiqatjou is an American Muslim intellectual, who reacts strongly against Modernism, liberalism, and present-day agenda. In his book

"The Modernist Menace to Islam: A Muslim Critique of Modern-Isms", he makes a critical appraisal of Modernism, claiming that "…Modernity is a menace to Islam. It is a menace to the human race…" [1, p. 1]. According to Daniel Haqiqatjou, progressivism, and secularism are pillars of Modernity. Moreover, he claims that religious tradition has no place in the modern world. Modern or modernized religion amounts to nothing more than a garnish on the side of the main course. The piece of parsley sits on the edge of the plate, inconsequential in every way. Modernity can tolerate parsley as long as it doesn't affect anything. At the end of the day, modernity requires everyone stuff themselves with its steaming pile of entrée [1, p. 3].

Given this critical approach of Daniel Haqiqatjou toward Modernism, it is crucial to list his remarks in the following way.

First, he claims that the notion of progress became the grundnorm underlying all modern thought and an unquestioned truth devoutly held by layman and intellectual alike. Here we begin to see the basis of modernity's menacing nature. Progress means that change becomes a virtue all unto itself. Constancy, in contrast, becomes the greatest vice. To resist change is seen as a literal assault on the human race. Modernity's number one enemy, therefore, is tradition since devotion to tradition means, among other things, resistance to change;

Second, he argues no version of secularism is the neutral space that it claims to be. Once we accept that, we can move on to more productive conversations. Concerning the nature of secularism Haqiqatjou writes, "Secularism is all about the means and actively distracts people from the ends. Because the ends are the domain of religion. Secularism will tell you the importance of action but will only give you vague assertions about the results. Because results are the domain of religion. Secularism will tell you that you have to vote but won't give you a substantive ethical vision on the basis of which to vote. Because substantive ethical visions are the domain of religion. Secularism will tell you to respect everyone equally but won't tell you what it means to be respectable. Because the core of respect and respectability is the domain of religion" [1, p. 26].

Of course, Daniel Haqiqatjou makes other critical remarks regarding Modernism. Interestingly, he applies the postmodern methodology of the Enlightenment's evaluation.

As a result, Modernism is portrayed as a philosophy of progress, secularism, militarism, cultural expansionism, and colonialism. In such an interpretation, Modernism is classified as a menace to Islam.

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