

**RESENSI BUKU**

**Friend, Theodore. *Woman, Man and God in Modern Islam*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012; 378 Pages.**

In writing this book, the author pursued both interviewing people and looking at reference books as his research methodology. He traveled to the countries where he collected his first-hand data and talked to the people with whom he met. From these experiences he observed marriage ceremony performances in the countries he visited (xix-xxviii). *Ijab kabul*, culturally traditional clothing for the brides, cultural decorations, and other cultural codes, which are an essential part of the performances, are also concrete expressions of the conceptual marriage of Islam and the local culture in each country.

Attention moves to religion, gender and modernity wherein Friend discusses radicalism's flowering in modern society. He notes a number of its expressions within each society observed. In American society, it exists in the form of "radical individualism," taking Christian fundamentalism to be its office, whereas in Iran its presence is seen in operations subjugating women in subordinate roles (4-5). Surprisingly, he notes, this gendered radicalism in Pakistan seems to have started the very year (1979) that witnessed the establishment of Islamic political radicalism by way of Pakistani dictator, Zia ul-Haq (4).

Among Muslims experiencing God occurs within sociological and political dynamics. Thus Muslims' understanding of Islam, God, and so forth are crafted within such dynamics, which serves as context for Friend's study. Concerning Indonesia he discusses Islamic revivalism and the intersections of poverty and disaster (22-31), along with the issues of matriliney against the strong influence of Wahhabism in Minangkabau (31-36), of the Qur'an and Women clothing (36-42), and of place of the *ijtihad* in doing exegesis (43-57). In addition to this, his conversation with prominent Muslim scholar,

Ulil Absar Abdalla, seems to suggest for his readers that at heart of the issue is the interpretation of the Qur'an, namely how much liberty Muslims have for doing exegesis.

In discussing Pakistan, poverty and misogyny (71-77), *madrasa* and social dysfunction (77-89), disaster and decorum (89-96), violence against women (96-104), and democracy and murder (104-113) are discussed within the context of the rising waves of enthusiasm for nation-state building, as well as the surge of self-bombing strategies by Islamists immediately following the establishment of the newborn state of Pakistan (59-71). Almost all state regulations bend in favor of the Islamist position, which forces their people beneath Islamist dominance. Contrasting this analysis to his treatment of Indonesia, what is excluded is any comparative discussion on the issues of Qur'anic interpretation. In other words, *ijtihad* has no place to function in Pakistan.

More interesting is the author's discussion of Saudi Arabia. Friend starts his exploration by comparing puritan profiles (115-124), and moves to other topics such as Arab tribes at war (124-135), modern travel in the Arabian Desert (135-146), developing Saudi state and society (146-154), seven prominent female professionals (154-166), sheikh culture, and the family (166-185). The discussion also includes Prince Nayef's reply to the Interpol that "he has been authorized by God to sell drugs." The statement of the prince, who is known to be a strict follower of the Qur'an, was scandalous to many.

Here again the discussion of *ijtihad* is absent. Furthermore, Friend seems to give his readers impressions of instability with regard to his sections on Indonesia and on Pakistan—whereas his presentation of the Saudi situation implies it to be that of a more stable country. Concerning Turkey, Friend registers eleven concerns, whereas he has only six regarding Iran. Curiosities certainly become piqued once Friend's readers find that he discusses the identity of God solely in context of Saudi Arabia (178-185). What seems arbitrary in his constant shifts of analysis concerning each country, begs for clarification: why did the author motion around to do so?

All of the author's national discussions aim to support his proposal—namely, for an "Open Islam". This reader suspects he refigured Islam as being a "closed ideology" in each country; as such, Friend politely criticizes the quality of closed-ness throughout

his book—making this text a highly recommended addition to one's personal library, as well as a strong addition to the collection of the university library.

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