

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewer's Name: Arifa Farid*
 Author of the book: Abdul Hamid Farid
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Reviewed by Dr. Arifa Farid. Professor (R) University of Karachi *PRAYERS OF MUHAMMAD* compiled and translated in English by (late) Abdul Hamid Farid, Advocate Chief Court Pakistan was first published in 1949 without Arabic text by Rizwan Publisher. Farid had completed the translation work before the partition of the sub-continent. He had authenticated all the contents of the book by including proper references from the Quran and the Hadith literature. Farid's own Introduction to the book and a foreword by the Bishop of Bombay, W.Q Lash are party of the book. This World Classic book which has seen several reprinting and publishing by different publishers of the world in Asia, Africa and North America could not be first published before 1949. Due to uncertainty at the time of the partition Farid could not get it published earlier though he had completed the translation from Arabic into English before partition of the Subcontinent. The late Maulvi Bashir Ahmed of Karkhan-e Tijarat-e-Kutub, Karachi, published it along with the Arabic text in 1957. The 1957 edition was very well received both in Pakistan and abroad. The Islamic Da'wa work was in progress with great fervor in South Africa. No English translation of Hisb-al-Maqbool or any other prayers of the Prophet (s.a.w.) was available in English then. Farid received many letters from South African publishers to allow them to publish this invaluable work, *PRAYERS OF MUHAMMAD* in South Africa. But on account of copyright and other problems Farid could not agree to allow its publication as desired by South African publishers. As the book was in great demand, therefore many foreign publishers wrote to Farid that they would in any case go ahead and publish it without formal permission from the author. Farid, a senior lawyer of Karachi High Court Bar, did not take any legal action against them as he was himself very eager that the book reaches all Muslim and non-Muslim homes. The purpose of the compilation and translation from Arabic into English, of this invaluable material i.e. *PRAYERS OF MUHAMMAD* (peace be on him,) and of other prophets (peace be on them) was not to make any material gain or earn name and fame; it was dedicated to the service of Islam. Farid had great trust that this work will help immensely in Da'wa Work and since the publishers were also keen to publish the book for the said purpose on the demand of the Da'wa workers, Farid felt in his heart that the promotion of this work without his formal permission is actually indication of God's acceptance of his little service to Islam.

Finally, S.M. Ashraf who was already in contact with Farid before partition with regard to the publication of this work, (but for some reasons the contract could not be finalized at that time,) published the second edition of *PRAYERS OF MUHAMMAD* in 1963. Therefore, now it was possible to send the book abroad without much difficulty as S, M Ashraf was an international publisher.

The Ashraf edition of *PRAYERS OF MUHAMMAD*, 1963 includes an index, also. The prayers were already arranged and titled separately according to various conditions and needs of life of the Prophet Muhammad and other prophets. It helps the reader to find immediately a prayer or prayers according to

* Arifa Farid, Ph.D. Professor of Philosophy(R), Former Dean Faculty of Arts, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan

his need or desire. Supplications to Allah, indeed, is the best way to find consolation in distress and for fulfillment of desire, or for seeking Allah's help and approval in different activities of life. Brief life sketches of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and the other prophets of Islam (peace be on them,) who are also the prophets of the Old and the New Testaments, explain their struggle in their spiritual journey. A thirty page Introduction to Islam, its creed, faith, and concept of God and worship, and its respect for human rights especially of weak and oppressed classes, such as women, slaves the orphans etc. gives an overview of Islam as a universal religion. Farid included Murmaduke Pickthall's *INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM* also in this edition.

Farid passed away in 1974, (may his soul rest in peace.) *PRAYERS OF MUHAMMAD* was published in the USA by some Muslim Da'wa publishers after seeking permission from one of Farid's heirs Nishat Shafi Balbale (daughter) who immediately consented to allow the book's publication in US as she knew that it was the wish of her father that the book is promoted for Da'wa work. She was herself involved in Islamic Da'wa work along with her husband Shafi Balbale who was one of the founder members of MSA from early sixties and remained with it till his death in 1994. The book became very popular as till then no translation and compilation of the prayers of the prophets of the Qur'an and of Prophet Muhammad was available in English for English speaking world. Since then many reprints of the book by Ashraf publications and other publishers around the world have appeared. In India it was published by Shad Publications, and Taj Co. The last reprint I have of S.M. Ashraf is dated 2006. Google search shows 172 entries under the name of Abdul Hamid Farid, the Compiler, Translator and Author of the article EPITOME OF ISLAM (which is a part of the book).

Besides Ashraf's reprints, several publications have appeared since then in North America, India, South Africa., and other Muslim countries and millions of copies are being used for Da'wa work. Copies of *PRAYERS OF MUHAMMAD* are also available in almost all big libraries in various Muslim countries, and also in personal libraries of many educated Muslims. My late father Abdul Hamid, Farid's desire to see the prayers of Muhammad and other prophets reach out to Muslim and non-Muslim homes all over the world is, Alhamdulillah, fulfilled to a great extent. The book is available now on internet. May Allah accept Farid's little service to Islam and bless his soul.

This book is available on Google, Amazon and several publishers' websites in different parts of the world on account of the extraordinary popularity as a book of spiritual guidance.