

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewer's Name: Kashif Iqbal*
Author of the book: Keren Armstrong
Title of the Book: *MUHAMMAD: A PROPHET FOR OUR TIME*
Publication detail: HarperCollins, 2006.
ISBN: 13: 9780060598976
No. of page: 256
Price: \$12.49 (online price)

Keren Armstrong is a Christian Scholar. She writes sympathetically towards religions to widen brotherhood and tries to lessen hatred. Her book *Prophet for our Times* investigates Prophet as a man for our times. Prophet as a man for our times implies here that he can be an example for the very present century.

The author of the book has tried to present something new. She writes that the prevailing concept of *Jahiliya* era is that before the advent of Islam all the literature was the literature of ignorance. On the other hand, the author argues that the word *Jahiliya* was not used to refer any literature but the Prophet tried to refer the state of mind which was the state of mind which was the state of ignorance. In this way, the author defines many prevailed concepts with new additions and understandings.

The book deals with the Prophet's life at Mecca and Medina. A short glimpse of his childhood has also been added. Further, Meccan life with regards to agriculture and other basic needs have been dealt. The Arabs kept migrating from here and there for search of food because terrains were not suitable for settlement. It was Taif from where they were provided food. The author argues that due to basic needs of water, food and slaves helped emerging *ghazu* (acquisition raid) in Arabia. Thus, interestingly author of the book holds that *ghazu* became an art in Arabia. It was not considered as any illegal act.

Moreover, the book provides prevailed tribal codes in Arabia. The way of living and Arabian tribal code of life have also been discussed in detail, such as Murawah (it meant courage, patience, endurance).

Interestingly, the book holds information that the terms like Jews and Christians were used as "tribal affiliation". It means these religious terms were tribal phenomenon at that time. Keren Armstrong argues that Allah was the God of Jews and Christians at the same time. They altogether performed Hajj and other rituals.

In the book there is a chapter *Jahiliya*. The title of the chapter has nothing to do with the chapter itself. In the chapter Prophet's experience of revelation has been discussed. The chapter deals with the audience of the Quran. Thus, I am little bit confused regarding the title of the chapter.

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Further, Prophet's difficulties of early preaching have been dealt. The author has dealt with the causes that led down migration from Mecca to Madena. The author has deeply investigated the causes and results of the migration. One of the causes of migration was to establish a society based on an ideology rather than blood relations. As it has already been highlighted that the Arab society was based on tribal lines. Thus, the Prophet led down a society based on an ideology. It is also interesting that the ideology was to reform social aspect of humans.

The book is a historical account of Prophet's life. The incidents and role of Prophet's companions have also been highlighted. Chronologically speaking, the book is a good account of information. The writing style and argument citation is also interesting.

In last, the book is a best account of those who want to defend the Prophet from the allegations that Western world has put on the Prophet. The book deals with many of the allegations.

It should be kept in mind that the book did not produce anything new. Other than some concepts, all the narration is historical. In fact, the style of the author has something interesting because her intellectual grasp makes the book charming. Further, it is an authentic account of the life of Prophet. In short, the book must be read by all the scholars and students to enhance their grip on Islamic history.