

Ulasan Buku/*Book Reviews*

Muhamad in the Qur'an: The Task and the Text by Kenneth Cragg. 2001. London: St. Edmundsbury Press. 224 pp. Reviewed by Zamri Arifin.

Kenneth Cragg is widely recognized as a leading Christian scholar of Islam. He has a deep and varied experience since he has lived and worked in Arab countries, the United States, the United Kingdom and West Africa. Cragg also is known for his previous works in the area of Islamic studies because he has written many books about Islam, the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad such as *The Call of Minaret* (1956), *The Event of the Qur'an* (1971), *The Mind of the Qur'an* (1973), *The Wisdom of the Sufis* (1974), *Reading the Qur'an* (1988), *Returning to Mount Hira'* (1994), *Islam Among Spires* (2000).

We can probably say the book reviewed here is a major contribution to a study of the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad in English. The focus of this book is chiefly on the relationship between Muhammad and the Qur'an. The book consists of an introduction and followed by nine chapters in different issues. This book ends with a note on the Qur'anic verses (p.211), the Qur'anic citations and Biblical References (p.212) and Index (p.216). In his introduction, the author gives a brief but comprehensive summary of the book and it presents the author's understanding of the issues when he says "the present study, accordingly, hopes to develop the several aspects of the significance of 'Muhammad in the Qur'an' (p.5). When describing the ideas in this book, Cragg says "in these nine chapters, there are also something of a foray into comparative theology, but only in the hope of servicing an Islamic as any lively orientalism might" (p.6).

The author starts the first chapter with the title "Partner to the Qur'an". In this chapter, Cragg discusses the issue of the partnership between Muhammad and the Qur'an when he decides that Muhammad in the Qur'an could equally well be the Qur'an in Muhammad (p.8). To sum up this chapter, Cragg states, "the care of this chapter was to clarify how central to the Scripture's *Tanzil* was a partnering factor in the persona of Muhammad" (p.25).

The title for chapter two is "The freeman in the land". It derives from the Quranic verse 90:2 "*Wa anta hillun bi hadha al-balad*". Cragg devotes this chapter to discussing the relationship between this Quranic verse with the life of Muhammad. He attempts to show how deeply Muhammad was possessed of and possessed by, his native land.

In chapter three entitled "Thou Who Art Enmantled", Cragg goes on to analyze the persona of Muhammad from the two Qur'anic verses, one from Surah 73:1 and another one from Surah 74:1. The title for chapter four is "*al-Rasul al-Nabi al-Ummi*". In this chapter, Cragg explores the significance and

implication of *Rasulullah* and *al-Ummi*, the two terms that have been granted to the Muhammad.

Chapter five is with the title “Till war lays down its burdens”. It starts with the verse 4 from Surah 47, the only Surah in the Qur’an that bears the Prophet’s name direct. This chapter is notably occupied with the legitimacy of the Hegira (Hejira) from Mecca to Medina. In addition, Cragg states that his main concern throughout these chapters (from one to five) being the significance of the Qur’an for the persona of Muhammad and of that persona in the incidence of the Qur’an, the place of the Hegira in that double theme is obviously crucial (p.90).

In chapter six, Cragg presents another term of addressing Muhammad in the Qur’an. The term ‘*Tasliyah*’ which derives from Surah 33:56. He points out that this term invites the ventures that occupy Chapter 7, 8 and 9 in this book and it is his first duty in this chapter to explore the context of verse 33:56 in Surah Ahzab or ‘partisans’ (p.114).

Cragg goes on discussing about “The incidence of the pre-existent” in chapter seven which started with the Qur’an in Surah 41:44. Cragg claims that the purpose of this chapter is to explore more deeply about the Islamic dogma of the Qur’an. Then, he goes further to discuss the term, which related to the Qur’an such as *Lawh mahfuz*, *Umm al-Kitab*, *Qur’anan ‘Arabiyan* and etc. The title of the chapter eight is “The foregoing and New Testament Christology”. This chapter focuses on a comparison between Islamic and Christian views. Cragg admits that “the purpose of the foregoing was not, primarily, to reach a Christian *confessio*, but rather to cast what light a Christology might throw on the selfhood of Muhammad in the conscious reception of the Qur’an (p.178). The book concludes with a chapter nine entitled “The Sirah in our contemporary scene”.

The book is attractively designed and printed but a number of corrections should be made. For instance, on page 17, the author quotes verses 113-115, Surah al-An‘am, the correct quotation instead is from verse 112-115. The same mistake occurred on page 19, the author stated only verse 105 from Surah 10, meanwhile the meaning of the verse that has been given starting from verse 104. On page 18, the author quotes the verse 33 from Surah 66, when we refer to the Qur’an, Surah 66 contains 12 verses only.

In short, this book is a well researched work with a profound analysis of the two important themes in Islamic studies namely the Qur’an and Muhammad. The book presents a refreshing new approach and contains much useful information on Muhammad and the Qur’an. The author’s wide-ranging personal experience in the area makes this book an invaluable source of information and thought. The importance of this book cannot be over stated. It is important for bringing together Islamic and Christian view about the Qur’an and Muhammad.

I strongly recommend this book especially for the interested readers and students of Islam. However, with caution in mind, if one has to read it, one must read it carefully and critically, because, in its style and content, it confuses

and mystifies rather than explains and informs, as real Islamic writing should, in spite of the fact that the author clearly announced that this book hopes of servicing an Islamic as any lively orientalism might(p.6). Because of this, it must be mentioned that here and there, in this book, one can easily find too many points that beg a detail discussion.

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