

Stigmatised from 9/11 to Trump and Beyond: A American Muslim Journey, Reza Mansoor (Create Space Independent Publishing Platform: 2016).

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The writer in the book describes lives of the ordinary American Muslims in the US after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre. He sketches how an attack by a few people, shaped the people's perception about Islam and Muslims today. Dr Mansoor builds a comparative scenario about the lives of ordinary Muslims living in the US pre and post-9/11 terrorist attacks. Although, the book has a limited regional focus on Connecticut, yet it depicts the story of the entire Muslim community in the US. The book is an interesting read, comprising of 271 pages.

The author starts the book with the events of the unfortunate day of September 11, 2001 and builds his recollection of the life pre and post the traumatic event around it. In the later chapters, he sheds light that how the Iranian Revolution changed the perception of the Muslims and Islam in the West. The revolution which was initially seen as a political unrest was soon converted to a Muslim unrest and hatred towards the West, especially the US. He narrates his experience when he has initially came to the US, for his medical studies, where he saw multi-ethnic societies, groups, religions and creeds all living together in harmony. As challenges grew after the 9/11, the author deemed it necessary to address the growing vacuum of misinformation regarding Islam in the West. Hence, the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut (MCCT) was founded which was specifically aimed to address and counter the anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiments in the US. The writer in the book wrote that the organisation was created to overcome the increasing 'hate caused by the people thousands of miles away' (p. 8).

Dr Mansoor further points out that how the anti-Islam and anti-Muslim groups played their role. He writes that "a cottage industry of self-styled scholars of Islam emerged, mostly non-Muslim, with very little knowledge of Islam who started to write op-eds, describing Islam as they pleased while

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quoting out of context verses of the Quran,” (p. 43). This also gave rise to the idea of Muslims hating the West, especially the US. Furthermore, Islam was painted as a backward religion with the worst of cultural values and as a natural enemy of the US. The author also highlights that there is no denying of a political play at hand, several law enforcement agencies are also playing the anti-Islam card to get better budgeting. Dr Mansoor talks about the “vicious cycle — the more terrorists are caught, the more laws could be enforced, limiting the freedom and eventually more money is allocated for the law enforcements,” (p. 71). Several times other members of the community like the Sikhs, as he says, are taken into confidence to spy on the Muslims and activities in Mosques, all of these actions fuels fear, hatred and ambiguity in the Muslim society.

Dr Mansoor repeatedly emphasises in his book the proactive role of the Muslim community to fight the growing intolerance against Islam. He gives examples of the MCCT as a platform where leaders and preachers of different religions have come together to fight Islamophobia. In the following chapters of his book, Dr Mansoor makes note of the report which acted as a stepping stone in eliminating a lot of the radicals writing against Islam. The report which was titled ‘Fear Inc.’ was made public and it shed light on the fact that how people are making fortunes by selling anti-Islamic rhetoric publicly and running foundations out of it. He also makes note of the fact that “most disturbing was that the government was paying these experts to spread hate and insecurities to law enforcement and intelligence agencies,” (p. 168).

Dr Mansoor, at large, in his book describes how interfaith efforts have led to positive effects in Connecticut, and how this can provide a blueprint or a base to other Muslim communities around the US and globally to fight Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. The book captures little to nothing on Trump as its title suggests, perhaps an edited version of the book later can bring to light the post-Trump scenarios of Muslims as immigrants or the anti-Muslim rhetoric, and the challenges Muslims and other communities are facing under the new Trump administration. The appendix to this book has several chapters of Islam, information which can be of great help to a reader interested in studying Islam.