Clarion Review

Philosophy

The Idea of Equality: A Myth, An Ideal, or A Reality

Aqeel A. Ansari
CreateSpace
978-1-4499-4192-5
Three Stars (out of Five)

As the world wages battles over religious conflict and political disparity, resolution seems ever more elusive. Differences in background, culture, and education have caused dangerous rifts between sparring nations, making the possibility of achieving international peace a distant ideal. Countless leaders and mediators continue to intervene on behalf of civilization, but even our definition of the common good is subject to analysis and opinion.

Ansari presents his plan for a viable, safe future in The Idea of Equality: A Myth, An Ideal, or A Reality? He believes violence and misery are "symptoms of historically dominant but failed secular and sacred perceptions of life" and strives to help humanity regain dignity. Though his book is intended for everyone, he relies heavily on the Qur'an as a reference source. In Part I, he discusses concepts such as coerced and voluntary civility, duality of church and state, sovereignty of the individual, along with underlying ideas of the Qur'an. Part II explores revealed knowledge, prejudice, and practices of clergy, with one chapter devoted exclusively to the status of women. He concludes by distinguishing between timeless versus time-bound institutions, while explaining Islam, and then delves into dismantling the edifice of religion.

Although Ansari's objective is worthy, his circumlocutions and redundancies confuse rather than clarify, and he overuses italics in the text, which can be distracting. These awkward issues, however, could be addressed by thorough copyediting. His book addresses the need to restore self-esteem and confidence to the human soul, thus establishing an equal social order.

Aqeel A. Ansari graduated from the Delhi School of Economics in India then continued his education at Wharton after immigrating to the U.S. in 1967. After he became a U.S. citizen, he served as an economic advisor to the Saudi government from 1980 to 1985. His first book, Satanic Whispers and Echoes of Truth: A Study in Interdependence of Dignity of Man and Just Social Order Based upon Rational and Reasonable Analysis, was published in 1994. He's active

in the Austin, Texas, community and has delivered a series of lectures for the International Association of Unity Churches.

"Men of understanding often liken human life to a journey," Ansari writes. "Life is a journey, they say, but man seldom contemplates the significance of the metaphor." His intellectual style requires careful reading and deep contemplation. He lays out a point-by-point method for realizing genuine happiness in what he perceives as a fair society.

Julia Ann Charpentier