The

Muslim World Book Review

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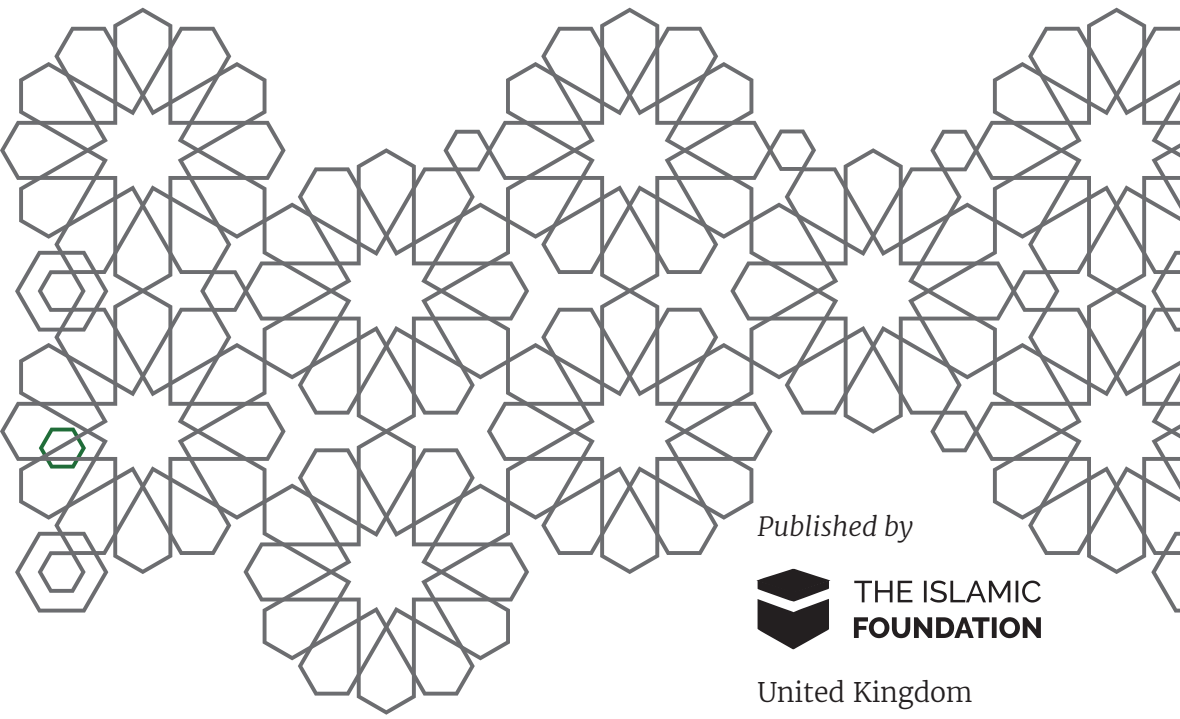
www.mwbr.org.uk

Volume 42 • Issue 1
Autumn 2021



Published by

THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

United Kingdom

2021/1443 ISSN 0260–3063

The Muslim World Book Review is a quarterly publication of the Islamic Foundation, Markfield, Leicestershire, UK. Its four issues are published in Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer.

This journal aims to present the Muslim viewpoint on books and issues which concern Islam and Muslims. At a time of near explosion in the growth of interest in these areas, accompanied by a disappointing level and quality of information, this review journal aspires to inform and stimulate lay readers and scholars alike, through detailed critical reviews, brief introductions and select bibliographies on recent and contemporary publications.

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THE STORY OF RUFINO: SLAVERY, FREEDOM, AND ISLAM IN THE BLACK ATLANTIC, by Joao Jose Reis, Flavio Dos Santos Gomes, Marcus J. M. De Carvalho. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 319. ISBN: 9780190224363

POLYMATHS OF ISLAM: POWER AND NETWORKS OF KNOWLEDGE IN CENTRAL ASIA, by James Pickett. New York: Cornell University Press, 2020. Pp. 447. eISBN: 9781501750830

THE ROHINGYA CRISIS: A PEOPLE FACING EXTINCTION, by Muhammad Abdul Bari. Markfield: Kube Publishing, 2018. Pp. 104. ISBN: 9781847741240

> '[T]hese models and preconceptions … will themselves tend to act as determinants of what we think or perceive. We must classify in order to understand, and we can only classify the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar'
>
> *Quentin Skinner, Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas*

In 1978, Edward Said presented a compelling argument within his work *Orientalism* regarding knowledge construction, European imperialism, and Islam. Building on the work of Michel Foucault, Said demonstrated that the knowledge constructed and propagated concerning matters Islamicate was not a neutral, objective endeavour; rather, it had been intimately linked with colonisation and the imperial machinations of Western nations. Orientalism had provided the intellectual justification for European colonization, and European colonization had, in turn, allowed for the development of

Orientalism. The dichotomous representations enmeshed within the discourse had constructed 'the West' as progressive, thoroughly modern, and free; whereas the Islamicate remained intransigent, stagnant, and bound to tradition within the Orientalist imaginary (Said 1978; Sayyid 1997; Turner 1989).

In place of critiquing particular scholars and their misrepresentations of Islam, Said's most significant provocation centred around the question of epistemology. The critique led to more self-reflexivity amongst scholars working on Islam, who actively distanced themselves from the Orientalist franchise (note the semantic shift from 'Oriental' studies departments to 'Islamic' studies). However, questions remain surrounding the extent to which a discipline formulated to cause epistemic and material harms to Muslims could be rehabilitated and reformed.

While contemporary discourses on Islam may differ substantially from the Orientalism of old (in some cases), the contours and lineaments established by the founders of the discourse continue to shape the conversations that currently take place. One of the clearest vestiges of the Orientalist legacy can be seen with a persistent Arab-centrism located within works pertaining to Islam. Islam has consistently been presented as an 'Arab religion' that has been thrust onto other peoples and nations within works pertaining to Islamic history (Bashir 2019; Gubara 2019; Asad 1973).

This inaccurate categorisation has also provided the intellectual foundations upon which global Muslim communities have been cast as foreign and invasive to a number of geographic regions. The tragic consequences of constructing Islam, and Muslim communities, as extraneous to lands in which they have been settled for centuries are playing out currently in India, Palestine, China, and Myanmar (which Abdul Bari's book importantly explores in detail).

The development of this narrative, however, transcends these specific locales. There has been a long history of attempting to establish an 'Islam vs. Africa' binary, in which Islam (often used synonymously with Arabs) is seen as an invading, colonial force in Africa. Equally, consider the language often used to describe the genocide and violent uprooting of Muslim communities from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. The concept of the '*Reconquista*' promotes the idea that Muslims settled in Iberia for upwards of 700 years were foreign to the lands of Europe (which is what justifies the notion of *Re*-conquest). These misrepresentations are only possible due to the privileging of particular epistemologies, and the silencing of others. The centring of differing epistemological positions becomes paramount to undoing a legacy of Eurocentric conceptualisations of Islam and its history.

The diversity of Muslim histories, for too long, have been overlooked. The works in this review essay have all been selected due to their attempts to stretch the limiting contours of Islam within academic discourses. Specifically, the four books chosen importantly serve to reconstruct the lost histories of the Muslim Ummah.

In her *China's Muslims and Japan's Empire*, Kelly Hammond provides perhaps one of the first in-depth studies of 'Sino-Muslims' and their experiences during WW2. Hammond distinguishes 'Sino-Muslims' from other 'non-Chinese speaking Muslim populations in China, such as the Uyghurs, or the Tajiks' (Hammond, p. 2). The book uses 'sources in five languages from seven countries' to weave together an important component of Muslim history in China (Hammond, p. xv).

Hammond centres the experiences of Sino-Muslims during WW2, highlighting the attempt of the Japanese empire to launch a charm offensive against Muslims in China specifically, and Muslims in Asia more generally. The Japanese saw Muslim communities as a strategic ally and, as a result, produced literature stating, 'Japan is the sun, Islam is the moon, which together emanate enough brightness to shine from East Asia throughout the entire world' (Hammond, p. 1). This constituted a clever play on Japan's sobriquet *the land of the rising Sun* and the association for Muslims with the Crescent moon. These aspirations were reinforced with government initiatives, such as scholarships to study in Tokyo or government-sponsored Hajj trips, for Sino-Muslims in China.

The hope for Japanese officials was to create a cadre of Muslims who would be loyal to the Japanese empire, who could in turn be deployed on diplomatic and trade missions across Muslim majority nations in the service of Japan. Hammond skilfully demonstrates the complex reception of these overtures from both the Sino-Muslim community and Chinese nationalists at large. There was no unanimity from amongst the Sino-Muslims regarding how to respond to the initiatives launched by the Japanese, and many remained sceptical. Equally, however, others attempted to utilise the interest from the Japanese to improve their position as a minority in China.

Hammond demonstrates the link between Muslims across Asia and highlights the agency of Sino-Muslims as they sought to forge a space for themselves and their communities in wartime China. Importantly, Hammond also provides insights into how Sino-Muslims utilised their connections to the wider Islamicate, as 'it was these connections to both an Islamic past and to an Islamic present that made Sino-Muslims valuable for Japanese imperial ambitions both within and beyond East Asia' (Hammond, p. 11).

In utilising their pan-Islamic links, 'Sino-Muslims helped the Japanese Empire manage its interactions with Muslims in South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa'. These *ummatic* connections allowed Sino-Muslim communities to become an important player in global networks. 'As Sino-Muslims sought political backers and funding to put their own reform agendas into place, the Japanese Empire reciprocated by establishing institutions, associations, and religious schools and mosques in occupied China. These were tangible contributions to the social and built landscape of Islam' (Hammond, pp. 23–24). This was not without its drawbacks, of course. This political brokering came at a cost of being maligned by Chinese nationalists as traitors. In reality, the Muslim communities in China 'carefully manipulated their Chinese, Muslim, local, cosmopolitan, and intellectual identities in ways that served their own interests'.

Throughout the book, Hammond demonstrates that 'both cooperation and conflict' ensued as part of such policies. As Japan attempted to gloss over its imperial ambitions, there was a deployment of 'strong anti-Western and anti-Soviet propaganda that appealed to anticolonial Muslim nationalist sentiments'. Within such propaganda, 'the Japanese Empire and the "Islamic world" were presented as simultaneously experiencing a revival' (Hammond, p. 146).

Against this backdrop, Hammond deftly weaves a compelling narrative that centres Islam in a period of history in which it is often overlooked and excluded. She traces the genealogy of Japan's interests in Islam back to the late Meiji period, exploring the historical context of such interests. She proceeds to highlight numerous developments surrounding the Sino-Muslim community and its responses. For example, Hammond draws attention to the strong resistance to curriculum reform posed by both Chinese nationalists and the Japanese empire, as Arabic was viewed as central to Muslim identity.

Though focusing on China in the 1940s, there are aspects of the book that feel relevant to contemporary discussions pertaining to Islam and Muslim communities. The attempt of both Japanese and Chinese authorities to utilise and manipulate Muslim minorities to achieve their own political ends holds striking parallels to the situation many Muslim communities currently face globally. The debates regarding curriculum reform, the shift away from Arabic learning, and the resistance to such a measure, remains eerily reminiscent of Kemalist proposals in Turkey post-1924 and France in 2021. Perhaps the most significant aspect of Hammond's contribution can be seen with her emphasis on Muslim agency in light of shifting potentialities in China. Sino-Muslims attempted to negotiate an increasingly complex political situation in which numerous external actors sought to deploy the community for

various political ends. The use of a broader network of Muslim nations by Sino-Muslims as an attempt to leverage their own autonomy constitutes an important point raised by Hammond.

Towards the close of the book, Hammond touches on the implications of Japanese surrender and its ramifications for the Muslim community in China. She brings to light an op-ed written by a Sino-Muslim named Ke Xing following the end of the war, in which he asks his readers 'Where would Sino-Muslims fit into this new postwar nation-state?' Ke Xing promotes looking outwards and emphasises the importance of 'improving relations with Muslim countries and developing schools and Arabic language training programs' (Hammond, p. 225). Indeed, Hammond highlights that after the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the symbol of Pakistan was regularly invoked as 'a positive example of Muslim self-governance' by Muslims in China in the hope that their situation would be improved.

The idea of a nation in which Muslims possessed autonomy provided a symbolic direction for communities worried about their future, and in that historical moment, prior to the cementation of borders following the war, 'Pakistan offered a glimpse of what could be for Sino-Muslims living in the new post-war, postcolonial era' (Hammond, p. 225).

As incidents of Islamophobia grow worse daily in contemporary China, and the atrocities against the Uyghurs continue, any discussions regarding autonomy and independence for Muslims in China now remain a distant dream. One does wonder, however, whether the same pan-Islamic networks that provided Sino-Muslims a certain amount of leverage and status could once again be revived to improve the dire situation many currently find themselves in.

Similar to Hammond's attempt to centre marginalised Muslim voices, *The Story of Rufino: Slavery, Freedom and Islam in the Black Atlantic* equally presents a neglected aspect of Muslim history. The tragedies and travails of enslaved African Muslims have been explored previously to various extents (Diouf 1998; Curtis 2014). However, a far more concerted effort needs to be devoted to recover the lost histories of African Muslims ensnared by the trans-Atlantic slave-trade. *The Story of Rufino* constitutes another welcome edition that provides a window into their lives.

The book was originally published in Portuguese and authored by Reis, Gomes, and Carvalho. Its recent iteration is an English translation penned by Sabrina Gledhill. The book relies heavily on police records as primary data. Much of the history of Africans in Brazil is dependent on such data, as other written forms of data remain scarce. The narrative follows the extraordinary

life of an African Muslim referred to as Rufino, though his original name was Abuncare (derived from Abdul Karim) (Reis, p. vii).

Rufino was born to the Kingdom of Oyo (modern day Nigeria) in the late 18th century. Following wars that plagued Oyo, Rufino was sold into slavery by his captors and transported to Bahia, Brazil in the early 1820s (Reis, p. 8). The situation that Rufino arrived in within Brazil was 'a tense atmosphere of rumours, accusations, and repression'. Rufino was considered dangerous by the authorities as he was a Yoruba-speaking Muslim. Muslim 'Nagos', as they were referred to, were viewed with extreme suspicion as 'Nagos' 'led the famous slave revolt of January 1835 and probably participated in prior uprisings and conspiracies as well, there having been at least thirty of them between 1807 and 1835' (Reis, p. vii).

There appears to have been historical precedent for Muslim rebellions against American slavery. In 1522, Charles V of Spain set forth a proclamation to exclude from the Americas 'slaves suspected of Islamic leanings'. This was following an uprising on Christmas day in which 20 enslaved Muslim Africans killed their captors and escaped, freeing a dozen Native Americans in the process (Lawler 2017).

The book reconstructs Rufino's life as he worked to buy his freedom, found work as a cook on a slave-ship bound for Angola, and his recapture by the British in 1841. The majority of his life story, however, was narrated when Rufino was arrested in Brazil in 1853 due to rumours he was helping to ferment a slave revolt. In this instance, 'police discovered in Rufino's home a large number of Arabic manuscripts—the same type of materials seized from the African rebels in Bahia nearly twenty years earlier' (Reis, p. 19). The authors distance Rufino from the slave revolts, describing him as a 'peace-loving Muslim', which perhaps was the case. It could reasonably be argued that Rufino did not participate in the rebellions against slavery and was indeed 'peace-loving'. Needless to say, revolting against the shackles of slavery does not necessitate that a person is 'violence-loving'.

It is relatively clear from the accounts provided that Rufino, alongside the revolutionary Muslims, attended and 'conducted prayer sessions and Qur'ānic writing exercises, ritual suppers, and celebrations of the Muslim calendar' (Reis, p. 19). Consequently, 'he must have gathered and prayed to Allah with fellow Muslims who later organized the armed uprising' in 1835, and he may himself have been part of such an uprising, except that he no longer lived in Bahia at the time of the revolt.

The book functions as a biography of Rufino, constructing his extraordinary life from the limited information that is still at hand. From his time as a

captive of the slave-trade, to his adventures across the Atlantic as a cook, the work highlights the trials, tribulations, victories, and losses of an 'articulate, multilingual, well-travelled and charismatic' African Muslim man (Reis, p. 241). However, the story is more than a simple biography. Throughout the work, readers are also given an important glimpse into the social history of the slave-trade in the Atlantic, and how Muslims from Africa attempted to preserve their religion and culture in the most testing circumstances.

We are told, for example, about raids that were conducted by suspicious police forces in the year 1838. Due to the linkages between Islam and slave revolts, the police were extremely interested in the 'Muslim schools' that were teaching 'blacks' to read and write. The documents that were confiscated were described as hieroglyphics, as the authorities could not decipher their meanings, nor access their content. Due to their preservation, we now know these documents included copies of the Qur'ān, as well as other devotional literature, such as the *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah* – a 13th century ode dedicated to praising the Prophet Muḥammad (blessings and peace be upon him). As the authors state, 'documents like this attest to the presence of literate Muslims... who got together to teach, pray, memorize, recite, and copy verses of the Qur'ān and other Islamic texts, as well as devotional and love poetry'.

As well as the story of Rufino (Abuncare), the narrative highlights how enslaved Muslims fought to preserve their identities in the face of the most brutal hostilities. The narrative demonstrates how enslaved Africans did not simply acquiesce to slavery; rather, they challenged the tyrannical systems exploiting them, and the book is replete with glimpses of this revolutionary zeal. Additionally, the work challenges lazy categorisations that seek to present a binary relationship between Islam and Blackness, highlighting how Black African communities sought to preserve their religious tradition, even through the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade.

Having traversed Muslim histories in China and the Americas, the third contribution turns to Central Asia, focusing primarily on Bukhara. James Pickett's *Polymaths of Islam* constitutes a meticulously researched contribution to the history of Central Asia and the *'Ulamā'* of Bukhara throughout the nineteenth century.

From the introduction of the work, Pickett demonstrates his scholarly prowess, providing substantial correctives to the conventional discourses pertaining to Islam in Central Asia. Pickett highlights the importance of recognising the contextual situatedness of the ideas that are often considered universal within the confines of Western knowledge-production. For example, he emphasises that, while the term Islamic 'brings to mind scripture and

mosque' for many readers, the Islamic scholars he explores in the book equally considered 'poetry, occult sciences, and medicine' within the remit of Islamic knowledge (Pickett, p.1). The book focuses on scholars and scholarship, however, 'the English translation scarcely does justice to the Arabic term "ulama"' – who not only taught in madrasas, but also advised the state, led mystical orders, and often managed business networks. Even the concept of geography is challenged, as Pickett highlights that the Bukhara which he assesses in not the 'museum-city' located in Uzbekistan, but a pivotal site of 'a much grander network of social-cultural exchange' (Pickett, p.1).

The book consists of eight chapters, centring on the history of the polymathic '*ulamā'* of Bukhara. Pickett explores the intricacies, nuances, and complexities of trying to locate and distinguish Islam, Turkic culture and the Persianate – highlighting how intertwined many of these concepts were. He devotes chapters to the history of Bukhara as a centre of knowledge within the Islamicate and the influence that Bukharan education and culture had throughout the nineteenth century. The book also brings to light the intricate negotiations amongst the '*ulamā'* and a Turkic military elite that were relied on for patronage, demonstrating the complex dynamics of power that informed elite networks within the period.

Pickett explains that our contemporary conceptions of what constitutes an 'alim' cannot be sustained trans-historically. Using the polymaths of Bukhara as an example, he highlights that their curriculum surpassed the 'grammar and logic emphasized in the madrasa. Even mastering substantive Islamic law from medieval Arabic texts was necessary, but not sufficient, to distinguish a high Persianate intellectual from his many, many competitors' Pickett, p. 244). Rather, the elite ulema of this period were fluent in 'poetry, mysticism, astronomy, calligraphy, medicine, trade, and more' (Pickett, p. 244). Pickett argues that Bukharan ulema were not unique in this regard, classical scholars such as 'al-Farabi (d. 950) or al-Biruni (d. 1048) were also polymaths, boasting mastery of an impressive array of disciplines' (Pickett, p. 128); however, the polymaths of Bukhara lived during a time of 'high Persianate culture' and were therefore 'more uniformly eclectic than ever before'.

Providing one example of such, the biographer of the scholar 'Abd al-Qādir notes, 'he achieved great mastery in languages, history, biography, epistolography, prose, poetry, medicine, astrology, astronomy, trigonometry, jurisprudence, theology, ethics, Sufism, art, music, and calligraphy' (Pickett, p. 127). The thirst for knowledge was not limited to male scholars, however. Pickett also makes references to female teachers, such as Bibi Khalifah of Bukhara, who was known for heroic feats of piety, teaching women ritual piety, and curing illness using 'magical scrolls' (Pickett, p.122).

In presenting these examples, Pickett challenges readers to think beyond Eurocentric conceptions of Islamicate history. The ulema were not simply 'protectors of Orthodoxy' clinging to literalist readings of scriptural texts. Rather, as Pickett demonstrates, they constituted a social class driven in their pursuit of knowledge. Importantly, their understanding of 'Islamic' knowledge was not limited to the 'sacred sciences' as has come to be understood in colonial modernity, but constituted a wide range of disciplines including medicine, art and poetry. Using the past, Pickett provides a glimpse into the future for those looking to reinvigorate 'classical' knowledge production amongst contemporary ulema.

The book also helps challenge the numerous distinctions that have been commonplace in the vernacular linked to Muslim history. In place of reading Muslim societies stratified along the lines of 'jurist ulama', 'Sufis' and 'poets', Pickett argues Muslim scholarship should be read as a 'unified social group of multitalented polymaths selectively performing sharia, asceticism, and poetry as circumstances dictated'. In doing so, the book asks readers to understand Muslim history on its own terms, in place of transmuting foreign dichotomies onto the Islamicate world.

Towards the close of the work, Pickett considers the impact of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, and the occupation of Bukhara in 1920. The rupture and trauma caused by Soviet expansion into Central Asia completely effaced much of the effervescent culture that preceded it. As with the communities within *The Story of Rufino*, the stories of many of these peoples remain completely lost to us. While Pickett paints a majestic picture of elite scholarship, high Persianate culture and a thriving Bukhara in the nineteenth century, the twentieth century presents a nightmare in which 'thousands upon thousands of [ulema] were repressed in the 1930s or executed, and those that survived were Sovietized' (Pickett, p. 248). Following Soviet imposition, the language of the ulema and madrasahs may have survived, but the functions of these concepts were utterly transformed. Understandings of knowledge, culture and religion altered irreparably, as 'sovietization was the end of a way of life'.

The final book under review brings one to contemporary Myanmar with the chilling contribution of Muhammad Abdul Bari entitled *The Rohingya Crisis: A People Facing Extinction*. While the other works explored may fall within the remit of historical studies, Abdul Bari's book serves as a call to action. Abdul Bari narrates the story of a forgotten people, who face some of the worst forms of state exploitation, violence, and abuse in the world.

The Muslim Rohingya have long faced persecution in Myanmar. However, in 2017, 'Myanmar's military and police forces, supported by the Rakhine

Buddhist chauvinists, launched a scorched-earth policy… hundreds of thousands of Rohingya men, women and children have been forced to leave their homes under appalling brutality' (Abdul Bari, p. xxxi). Abdul Bari presents evidence to demonstrate that 'systemic mass rape has been used as a weapon by the Burmese military' (Abdul Bari, pp.30–31), as well as horrific violence, in a bid to force the Rohingya out of Myanmar.

Many of the Rohingya have been forced to make their way to the border of Bangladesh, which has previously given shelter to around 400,000 Rohingya refugees escaping persecution. At the time of writing the book, over 1 million Rohingya have been displaced, 'most parts of Northern Rakhine, the heartland of the Rohingya people for centuries, has been turned Rohingya-free' (Abdul Bari, p.xxiv).

Due to state policies, the Rohingya have been unable to claim citizenship. According to Abdul Bari, Muslims have been living in the land of Rakhine for upwards of 1,000 years (Abdul Bari, pp.1–4). However, 'as the 1947 Constitution did not formally recognise the Rohingya people as citizens, they could not become citizens in 1977 when the army launched a national drive to register citizens; they were once again left in total limbo' (Abdul Bari, p.15).

The most chilling aspect of Abdul Bari's book is perhaps the final chapter, 'what is to be done?' In this concluding chapter, Abdul Bari explores some suggestions on how to resolve the situation. Much of this revolves around calls to the UN to facilitate a return to Rakhine and provide a promise of full and equal rights to the Rohingya. While admirable in principle, this would necessitate a fundamental change in stance from the Myanmar government and a willingness to repatriate all of the Rohingya that have been expelled – a reality that is clearly not forthcoming. And this is perhaps why it is the most worrying chapter of the piece, as it is a recognition that within our contemporary world, genocides against powerless communities are often met with no more than a shrug of the shoulders within the current configuration of global power.

Importantly, Abdul Bari does note that the 'Rohingya crisis would not have come to this stage if the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)…was effective' (Abdul Bari, p. 57). This statement is perhaps the most provocative and calls for reflection.

Why has international Muslim leadership failed its constituencies to this extent? And more importantly, how can it rectify the situation to ensure that, unlike the extinct Bukharan polymaths and enslaved African Muslims who were lost to us, the Rohingya in Myanmar do not simply become an historical lamentation in a future book review.

'People become without history not because they lack a past but because, paradoxically, they cannot narrate themselves into the future' (Sayyid 2014, p. 2). The act of reading history is an exercise in writing the future. We read history not only to understand the past and present, but also to envisage what comes next. Recovering the global histories of Muslims is paramount to imagining a global future for Muslims. As Abdul Bari warns us, the existence of such futures should not be taken for granted.

The history of the global Muslim Ummah, over 1400 years young, spanning numerous continents, languages, and ethnicities, belongs not only to the 1.8 billion Muslims in the world but remains a pivotal chapter in the story of human civilization and development. While the Orientalist imaginary sought to parochialize the history of Islam and portray it as a violent, bloodthirsty 'Arab religion', the four works presented in this review all challenge this false categorisation.

Hammond offers us insights into the complicated lives of Muslims in China during WW2, while Reis, Gomes and Carvalho highlight the travails of enslaved African Muslims in the Americas. Pickett reminds us of the greatness of scholarship that once was in Bukhara, and how even the brightest lights can be extinguished in the shortest spaces of time without the proper structures to protect and preserve them. And Abdul Bari's contribution asks us to consider the plight of the Rohingya, and what can be done to help an immiserated and powerless community in the face of callous oppression. *Ummatic* networks helped provide solidarity to the Sino-Muslims once, one can only hope they may be revived again to help protect the Rohingya, and others, in the future.

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Islamic Thought and Sources

THE QURAN: AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION. By Atbae Alrabi. Amazon Digital Services LLC. KD Print 2020 Pp. 536. ISBN: 9798633743418.

A weird and totally unacceptable practice in the field of English translation of the Qur'ān by some people is blatant plagiarism. Their plagiarism consists in lifting an earlier translation word-for-word and passing it off as their own, new and rather original contribution to the field. Out of around 100 translations that I have scrutinized, the following belong to this category:

1. *Majestic Quran* (2000) by the Translation Committee consists of big chunks of material taken without any acknowledgment from M. M. Pickthall (1930) and Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934–1937).
2. Syed Vickar Ahamed's translation (2005) is regrettably an instance of plagiarism in that it draws heavily, rather word for word, on Abdullah Yusuf Ali's (1934–1937).
3. Leila Bakhtiar (2007) has borrowed material from A. J. Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted* (1995).
4. M. Sharif Chaudhary's (2010) is based largely on Pickthall's translation (1930).
5. Peachy and Johani's work (2012) is derived, once again, from Pickthall's.
6. Jibouri's (2014) betrays the translator's borrowings from Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934–37).

The latest addition to this reprehensible category is the translation under review which is a word-by-word copy of Ali Quli Qarai's *The Quran* (London, ICAS, 2004). Only two passages are cited as proof.

A) 1. Alif, Lām, Mīm.
2. This is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the Godwary
3. Who believe in the Unseen, maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;
4. and who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain of the Hereafter.
5. Those follow their Lord's guidance and it is they who are the felicitous.
6. As for the faithless, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith.

7. God has set a seal on their hearts and their hearing, and there is a blindfold on their sight, and there is a great punishment for them.
8. Among the people are those who say, 'We have faith in God and the Last Day,' but they have no faith.
9. They seek to deceive God and those who have faith, yet they deceive no one but themselves, but they are not aware.
10. There is a sickness in their hearts; then God increased their sickness, and there is a painful punishment for them because of the lies they used to tell.
11. When they are told, 'Do not cause corruption on the earth,' they say, 'We are only reformers!'

(Alrabi, *al-Baqarah* 2: 1–11, p. 9)

1. Alif, Lam, Mim.
2. This is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the Godwary,
3. Who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;
4. and who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain of the Hereafter.
5. Those follow their Lord's guidance, and it is they who are the felicitous.
6. As for the faithless, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith.
7. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and their hearing, and there is a blindfold on their sight, and there is a great punishment for them.
8. And among the people are those who say, 'We have faith in Allah and the Last Day,' but they have no faith.
9. They seek to deceive Allah and those who have faith, yet they deceive no one but themselves, but they are not aware.
10. There is a sickness in their hearts; then Allah increased their sickness, and there is a painful punishment for them because of the lies they used to tell.
11. When they are told, 'Do not cause corruption on the earth,' they say, 'We are only reformers!'

(Qarai, *al-Baqarah* 2: 1–11, p.2–3)

B) 1. Ha, Mim.
2. The gradual sending down of the Book is from God, the All-mighty, the All-knowing,

3. forgiver of sins and acceptor of repentance, severe in retribution, yet all-bountiful; there is no god except Him and toward Him is the destination.
4. No one disputes the signs of God except the faithless. So do not be misled by their bustle in the towns.
5. The people of Noah denied before them and the heathen factions who came after them. Every nation attempted to lay hands on their apostle and disputed erroneously to refute the truth. Then I seized them; so how was My retribution?!
6. That is how the word of your Lord became due concerning the faithless, that they shall be inmates of the Fire.
7. Those who bear the Throne and those who are around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and have faith in Him, and they plead for forgiveness for the faithful: 'Our Lord! You embrace all things in Your mercy and knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow Your way and save them from the punishment of hell.
8. Our Lord! Admit them into the Gardens of Eden, which You have promised them, along with whoever is righteous among their forebears, their spouses and their descendants. Indeed, You are the All-mighty, the All-wise.
9. Save them from the ills of the Day of Resurrection, and whomever You save from the ills that day, You will have had mercy upon him, and that is a mighty triumph.'
10. It will be proclaimed to the faithless: 'Surely God's outrage towards you is greater than your outrage towards yourselves, as you were invited to faith, but you disbelieved.'

(Alrabi, *Ghāfir* 40: 1–10, p. 278)

1. Ha. Mim.
2. The [gradual] sending down of the Book is from Allah, the All-mighty, the All-knowing,
3. forgiver of sins and acceptor of repentance, severe in retribution, [yet] all-bountiful, there is no god except Him, [and] toward Him is the destination.
4. No one disputes the signs of Allah except the faithless. So do not be misled by their bustle in the towns.
5. The people of Noah denied before them and the [heathen] factions [who came] after them. Every nation attempted to lay hands on their

apostle, and disputed erroneously to refute the truth. Then I seized them; so how was My retribution?!

6. That is how the word of your Lord became due concerning the faithless, that they shall be inmates of the Fire.
7. Those who bear the Throne, and those around it, celebrate the praise of their Lord and have faith in Him, and they plead for forgiveness for the faithful: 'Our Lord! You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow Your way and save them from the punishment of hell.
8. Our Lord! Admit them into the Gardens of Eden, which You have promised them, along with whoever is righteous among their forebears, their spouses and their descendants. Indeed You are the All-mighty, the All-wise.
9. Save them from the ills; and whomever You save from the ills that day, You will have had mercy upon him, and that is the great success.'
10. Indeed it will be proclaimed to the faithless: 'Surely Allah's outrage [towards you] is greater than your outrage towards yourselves, as you were invited to faith, but you disbelieved.'

(Qarai, *Ghāfir* 40: 1–10, p. 657–659)

Not only Qarai's English translation of the Qur'anic text, as is evident from the above glaring instances, Alrabi has brazenly copied all Qarai's explanatory notes, though a few are his own, to which we will come back later. The Bibliography too, is taken from Qarai's work.

Since it is a replica of Qarai's translation, which has already been reviewed by me in the MWBR, only the main points are recapitulated below.

The first and foremost point is that it is a sectarian, Shī'ah interpretation of the Qur'ān. Every school of thought is fully entitled to hold and express the views peculiar to it. However, in a translation of the Word of Allah, every translator is obliged to state clearly their ideological stance, for the unscrupulous translators superimpose their sectarian and whimsical presuppositions on the Qur'ānic text and parade their own notions as the intended meaning and message of Allah. This may misguide the unsuspecting readers who have access to the original Qur'ānic/Arabic text only through their translations. Such readers are at the mercy of these translators for gaining their (mis)understanding of the Qur'an. To the best of my knowledge, so far the only complete English translations representing the Shī'ah belief system have been done by: 1) S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali (1964). 2) M. H. Shakir (1968), Muhammad Baqir Behbudi (1997) and Ali Quli Qarai (2004). Of these, only S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali declares

his sectarian slant on the title page of his translation thus: *The Holy Quran with English Translation of the Arabic text and Commentary according to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait.* Such a statement of intent is laudable, for it does not mislead readers. Otherwise, scores of English translations by Orientalists, Qadyanis, sectarian and un-Islamic ideology-driven individuals and groups are freely available in market and libraries, and now increasingly on the Internet, which undermine, discredit and distort altogether the Islamic articles of faith and practices, the illustrious role and character of Prophet Muḥammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and his Companions and other Islamic sanctities.

According to Qarai, and his copyist Alrabi, the Qur'ānic text affirms the following typical Shī'ah beliefs:

- The excellence of *Ahl Al-Bayt* (the Prophet's family consisting only of ʿAlī, Fāṭimah and their children) in 83 Qur'ānic verses.
- The virtues of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib in 113 Qur'ānic verses
- The condemnation of the Umayyads in 15 Qur'ānic verses.
- The greatness of Fāṭimah and her descendants in 26 Qur'ānic verses.
- The concept of Imāmah in 17 Qur'ānic verses.
- Reference to Imam al-Ḥusayn in 4 Qur'ānic verses.
- Reference to Imam al-Mahdī in 40 Qur'ānic verses.
- Reference to *Imāmah* and *walāyah* in 60 Qur'ānic verses.
- Reference to the deniers of *imāmah* in 68 Qur'ānic verses.
- False claimants of *Imāmah* in 86 Qur'ānic verses
- Followers of the Imam in 73 Qur'ānic verses.

(For details see Qarai, pp. 877–938 and Alrabi, pp. 407–434)

For the students of the Qur'ān, this account of the labyrinthine superstructure of Shī'ah beliefs with their Qur'ānic moorings may strike one as a revelation in itself.

Notwithstanding the fairly good level of the English idiom employed by Qarai; his rendering, and hence of Alrabi too, is marred by the use of some archaic, even unintelligible English words, as for example, 'baseborn, froward, Godwariness, Godwary, Gooddoers, plantains. The use of such uncommon and dated words may put off readers, rather than attract them to reading this translation. Equally unacceptable is his use of the term "Apostle" for the Prophet Muḥammad (blessings and peace be upon him). In view of its different overtones in the Bible, this term does not befit a Messenger or Prophet of Allah. Qarai/Alrabi do not elucidate the Qur'ān in today's context, which is

another serious shortcoming. Rather, their focus in the explanatory notes is on historical and doctrinal issues alone.

Although Alrabi has borrowed the contents of his work from Qarai, without any acknowledgment, he has contributed, to the best of my knowledge, only six explanatory notes. The first one is in the acerbic sectarian vein. The Qur'ān posits *al-shajarah al-mal'ūnah,* the accursed tree, i.e. *zaqqūm*, as an odious, unpalatable fruit for the inmates of Hell in *al-Isrā'* 17:60. Without any regard for context, Alrabi, however, presents it as a 'referring to the Umayyad clan, who persecuted the Prophet for more than a decade... and within a generation after his sad demise seized control of the Islamic state established by him, turning it into a hereditary monarchy, subverting the *sunnah* and Quranic norms ... ushering in an era of despotic rule and a culture of submission which has lasted for than (sic) a millennium and continues to cast its dark shadow over the political situation throughout the Islamic world' (pp. 458–459). His explanatory note on the concept of *walāyah* is, however, free from any sectarian colouring, notwithstanding this being a characteristic Shī'ah belief that brings to mind Khomeini's *wilāyat-i faqīh* doctrine (p. 473). Like Qarai, he names the Prophet Muḥammad's wives Ḥafṣah and 'Ā'ishah in the context of the *taḥrīm* incident, which the Qur'ān cites without naming any name (*al-Taḥrīm* 66: 1–4). Going a step further, he brands it as 'an ominous conspiracy' (p. 489). Needless to add that the sectarian divide is to the fore in projecting these daughters of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb who were the Prophet's holy wives as the villain of the piece.

More audacious is his rendering of *Sūrah al-Ḍuḥā* on the authority of [the Imams of the Prophet's family!": 'Did He not find you unique and unmatched (*yatīman*) among His creatures and so made you the resort and refuge of your people? Did He not find you lost amongst a people who did not know your worth and then guided them towards you? Did He not find you as one responsible for sustaining and guiding a community and enriched it through you?' (p. 496). Alrabi's above views find their echo in the English translations of the Qur'ān by these Barelwi writers: Shah Faridul Haque (1988), Abdul Majeed Auolakh (1990), and Tahirul Qadri (2011).

Alrabi's sectarian zeal once again surfaces in his misconstruing the thrust of verses 7–8 of *al-Sharḥ* directing the Prophet Muḥammad (blessings and peace be upon him) to: 'Appoint your successor to lead the community after you' (p. 496). What he implies is that the Qur'ān pointedly asked the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) to designate 'Alī as his successor which he did not do.

Likewise, he takes the Qur'ānic expression, '*al-Na'īm*' (*al-Takāthur* 102: 8) as 'the teaching related to *tawhid*, prophethood and the *walayah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Imams of his family' (p. 497).

Such sectarian ebullition apart, Alrabi's work is a repulsive example of unpardonable plagiarism and hence should be dismissed with the contempt which it deserves.

TRADITION OF TAFSIR (QUR'ĀNIC EXEGESIS) IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT. By Abdul Kader Choughley. Aligarh, India, K. A. Nizami Centre for Quranic Studies in association with Springs, South Africa, Ahsan Academy of Research, 2021. Pp. 376. ISBN: 978181952534̲32.

Abdul Kader Choughley has recently broadened and deepened the study of Islam, especially of Qur'ānic studies in South Asia. In association with the K. A. Nizami Centre for Quranic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, he has now brought out this insightful book, meticulously analyzing the works of *tafsīr* in the Indo-Pak subcontinent over the centuries. Apart from his own thought-provoking observations on the topic under study, his work basically constitutes a balanced and engaging critique on the publication series in Urdu of Aligarh Muslim University Quran Centre on the contributions of various schools of thought to Qur'ānic studies, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries.

It must be pointed out that, in terms of the number of publications on *tafsī*r and their large readership, Urdu is next only to Arabic; surpassing the number of Qur'ānic studies in other languages of the Muslim world such as Turkish and Persian. Of late, however, a spate of *tafsīr* studies in Malay and Bhasa have appeared in Malaysia and Indonesia respectively, underscoring the renewed interest in Qur'ānic scholarship in that region.

Divided into 10 chapters, along chronological and ideological lines, Choughley's study opens with a penetrating scholarly introduction (pp. 1–35), some of its salient points are: the pre-requisites and functions of *tafsīr* vis-à-vis the *i'jāz* of the Qur'ān (inimitability of the Qur'ān); the daunting task of translating the Qur'ānic text in terms of equivalence and underscoring the principle of *naẓm* (coherence) in such a large text as the Qur'ān, of which more than 6000 verses were revealed over a period of twenty-three years, often in response to the ever-changing exigencies of the Prophet Muhammad's day. As to the genesis of the *tafsīr* tradition in the subcontinent, Choughley has aptly accorded the pride of place, to the largely unacknowledged *Tafsīr al-Mahā'imī* by Makhdūm ʿAlī Mahā'imī (d. 1431), a descendant of a Nawait family, of which the lineage may be traced back to Quraysh. *Tafsīr al-Mahā'imī* came to light in 1878, as its first edition was published in Egypt and later in Lahore and Hyderabad, Deccan. This *tafsīr* projects the Qur'ān as a literary

masterpiece and is interspersed with Mahā'imī's profound observations on *kalām* and *taṣawwuf*.

Another earlier, though obscure, *tafsīr* in Arabic worth mentioning is the one by Shaykh Mubārak Nagūrī (d. 1593). At one end of the scale, both Shaykh Mubārak and his two sons, Abū'l-Faḍl and Fayḍī have justifiably drawn opprobrium for launching the notorious *Dīn-i Ilāhī*, a mixture of Islam, polytheism and veneration for the Mughal emperor of the day, Akbar (1542–1605), yet at the other end, Shaykh Mubārak's tafsīr *Manbaʿ al-ʿUyūn* stands out, in Choughley's brilliant analysis as 'an act of redemption for his disingenuous attempts to dislodge the primary position of the Quran and Sunnah against the fraught backdrop of Akbar's reign' (p. 28). *Tafsīr-i Aḥmadī* by Aḥmad Abū Saʿīd, popularly known as Mullā Jīwān (d. 1717) focuses on the elucidation of the Qur'ānic commands and their resultant *fiqhī* rulings.

As judiciously observed by Choughley, Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1762) made a huge contribution to Qur'anic studies with his Persian *tafsīr, Fatḥ Al-Rahman* as well as his other valuable writings, particularly *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligḥah,* and *al-Fawz al-Kabīr.* His sons also made sterling contributions in this domain, Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 1824) having authored the *tafsīr*, *Fatḥ al-ʿAzīz* in Urdu, and ʿAbd al-Qādir (d. 1815) the *tafsīr*, *Mūḍiḥ al-Qur'ān*. The Walīullāh school brought about Islamic revivalism in British India. In the 19th century Muslims were politically, financially, socially, educationally and culturally impoverished. They were vulnerable on various counts: the aggressive Christian missionaries, the ever-increasing ascendancy of the majority Hindu community that vastly outnumbered them, and the ever-growing westernization, materialism, secularism, liberalism, and even atheism among their rank and file. The ulema of the day, led by *tafsīr* writers, took up these formidable challenges. Thanā'ullāh Panipati's *Tafsīr-i Maẓharī* also contributed to Islamic revivalism, Choughley's enviable grounding in the *tafsīr* canon is evident from his identification of the influence of contemporary Arab and African scholars, particularly Shawkāni, Rashīd Riḍā and ʿUthmān Dan Fodio on the *tafsīr* tradition in the subcontinent. As already hinted, chapters 2 to 10 constitute Choughley's astute critique of the recent series of books in Urdu brought out by the KAN Quranic Centre, AMU, Aligarh, India on the contributions of the following schools of thought and institutions in the subcontinent: the Deobandis, the Shīʿah, the Barelwis, the Nadwis, the *Ahl-i Ḥadtīh*, *Jamāʿāt-i Islāmī*, *Madrasat al-Iṣlāḥ*, Azamgarh, Aligarh Muslim University and other prominent Qur'ān scholars who were not affiliated with any of the above. Choughley's comments, however, are not restricted to pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of these publications. It is indeed gratifying to note his extensive and incisive

additions to the *tafsīr* domain, and the excellence of the book under review lies in this.

Among the major *tafsīr* writers analysed in Choughley's book are: Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, Ashraf ʿAlī Thānawī, Mufti Muḥammad Shafīʿ and Muḥammad Idrīs Kandahlawī (Deobandi); Pir Muḥammad Karam Shāh, and Tahirul Qadri (Barelwi); Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī and Uwais Nagrami (Nadwi), Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān and Thanā' Allāh Amritsarī (*Ahl-i Ḥadīth*); Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, Ajmal Ayyūb Iṣlāḥī (*Madrsat al-Iṣlāḥ*); Jalīl Aḥsan Nadwī, Sayyid Ḥamīd ʿAlī and Khurram Murad (*Jamāʿat-i Islāmī*), Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Fazlur Rahman Gannori, Zafarul Islam (Aligarh Muslim University) and ʿAbd al-Mājid Daryābādī, Abū'l-Kalām Āzād, Waḥiduddīn Khān and ʿAbd al-Karīm Parikh (Others), and Mirzā Mahdī Poyā, and Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī Naqvī (Shīʿah). Choughley has been remarkably successful in assessing the distinctions and occasional deviations of scores of these *tafsīr* writers of the subcontinent. His broad sweep of scholarship is to the fore in his comprehensive bibliography (pp. 365–376), as he tracks down almost all that is there on the topic in both English and Urdu.

This evaluative study fills a long felt serious gap in Qur'ānic scholarship by way of alerting readers to the ideological presuppositions and dogmatic stances of certain writers, which are not borne out by the Qur'ānic text itself.

ISHARIA SHASHMAHI 'ULUM AL-QURAN (Index to the Journal of Qur'anic Studies 1985–2020) [Urdu], compiled by Zafarul Islam Islahi. Aligarh, India: Idara Ulum Al-Quran, 2021. Pp. 112. No ISBN.

In 1985 some dedicated alumni of Madrasah al-Islah, Azamgarh, established the Idarah Quran at Aligarh with the objectives of producing quality research on the Qur'ān in today's idiom and context. In pursuance of the same, the Idarah has been bringing out since 1985 its biannual Urdu periodical, *Majallat 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Journal of Quranic Studies). Zafarul Islam Islahi, former Chairman and Professor of Islamic Studies at the AMU, and one of the founders of this Centre and a regular contributor to this journal, has done well to publish a reader-friendly, subject-wise index of the contents of this important journal in the last 35 years. Some of the outstanding features of this journal include thought-provoking articles on various aspects of Qur'ānic scholarship, with a focus on *tafsīr* studies, book reviews on recent publications on the Qur'ān; occasional bibliographies on Qur'ānic studies in Urdu in the Indo-Pak subcontinent, and an overview of Qur'ān studies around the world. Besides its fifty issues so far, the journal has published three special issues: (1) Mawlānā

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī; (2) Qur'ānic Studies in the 20th century; and (3) Current Issues and Challenges according to the Qur'ānic perspective.

Each issue of the journal opens with a scholarly editorial, elucidating a Qur'ānic concept. These editorials have been contributed mostly by Ishtiaq A. Zilli, Zafarul Islam Islahi and Abul Azim Islahi.

Since the main objective of this journal is to disseminate the teachings of the Qur'ān, many of the articles (around 50) are devoted to the exposition of the Qur'ānic worldview, and its validity in our times. Another strong area of this journal is the evaluation of classical and *recent* works of *tafsīr* and Qur'ān translations not only in Urdu but also in Bengali, Balochi, Hindi, Persian, Turkish and Russian languages. The focus in the *tafsīr* and book review sections is on Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī and Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, particularly their *naẓm* theory. Abū Sufyān Iṣlāḥī's series of extensive bibliographies of books and articles in Urdu, displaying his meticulous research, helps readers identify the main contours of the latest Qur'ānic scholarship. Equally gratifying is going through its book review section, containing both long and short reviews on more than 165 recent writings. Together with the bibliographies, these reviews acquaint readers with the ongoing scholarly debates on various issues according to the Qur'ānic perspective. Most of the book reviews are on Urdu writings and a few are on Arabic and English works.

Zafarul Islam has devoted his entire life to serving the cause of the Qur'ān, with several valuable books and scores of articles. One of his abiding achievements is the production of this high quality Urdu journal on the Qur'ān, of which this helpful Index provides useful publication details. This Index underscores the robust Qur'anic scholarly tradition in Urdu in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. It is hoped that the readers will turn to the Word of Allah for guidance and for leading life in accordance with its directives which alone can ensure success in both worlds.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC STUDIES, ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, TO QURANIC STUDIES (Seminar Proceedings), edited by Obaidullah Fahad and Ziauddin Falahi. (English and Urdu). Aligarh, India: Publications Division, Aligarh Muslim University, 2021. Pp. 118 (English) + 357 (Urdu). ISBN: 9788195171026.

Comprising 39 articles, of which 10 are in English and 29 in Urdu, this edited volume seeks to showcase the studies on the Qur'ān carried out at the Department of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India. It is

worth adding that besides the Department of Islamic Studies, the Departments of Sunni and Shia Theology and K. A. Nizami Centre for Quranic Studies, have also been vigorously engaged over the decades in both the teaching of and research on the Qur'ān at the Aligarh Muslim University.

The volume under review projects a well-focussed, analytical survey of Qur'ānic scholarship enriched appreciably in their own way by the scholars associated with the Department of Islamic Studies since its inception in 1954. Abdul Aleem, Nejatullah Siddiqi, Yasin Mazhar Siddiqi, Zafarul Islam, Obaidullah Fahad and Ziauddin Falahi deserve mention as its prominent faculty members. It is therefore perfectly in order that their major works have been critically examined. The Department also brings out its own journal. It is a pity that this journal has been irksomely irregular in its production. More intriguing, however, is the picture which emerges from Mohammad Teisir Bin Shah Goolfee's otherwise brilliant article, "The Quranic Sciences in the Journal/Bulletin of the Institute of Islamic Studies" (pp. 26–49). According to this study, a pitiably low number of only 9 (nine) articles in English on the Qur'ān have appeared in this journal, the first one in 1962–63 and the last one in 2017–2018. In view of the pivotal position of the Qur'ān in Islamic studies, this apathy is deplorable. The articles published on the Qur'ān in the journal are:

1. Sayyid Maqbul Ahmad, *Geographical Materials in the Qur'ān.*
2. Abdollah Jassbi, *The Question of Wealth in Islam.*
3. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, *Modern Approaches to History: A Study of the Qur'ānic Approach in Comparison with Western Methodology.*
4. Abdul Ali, *Contribution of Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan to Islamic Religious Sciences.*
5. Razi Ahmad, *Qur'ānic Injunctions for Tolerance and Peace.*
6. Obaidullah Fahad, *A Study of Bennabi's Al-Zahirah al-Qur'aniyah.*
7. Syed Sibtey Hasan, *Bediuzamman Said Nursi's Religious Thoughts in the light of the Risala-i Nur.*
8. Abdur Raheem Kidwai, *Muslim Response to the Bible: A Study of the Urdu Tafasir of Mahmudul Hasan* (1851–1920), *Daryabadi* (1892–1977) and *Mawdudi* (1903–1979).
9. Obaidullah Fahad, *Socio-Political Dimensions of the I'ijāz al-Qur'ān.*

Goolfee has done a good job in analysing these articles. However, his dexterous critique does not and cannot compensate for the paucity of articles in this journal.

In the Urdu section of the volume, the studies carried out by Nejatullah Siddiqi, Abdul Aleem, Kabir Jaisi, Yasin Mazhar Siddiqi, Salim Kidwai, Obaidullah Fahad, Zafarul Islam and Ziauddin Falahi have been examined rigorously by a host of mostly young scholars. Some of the significant contributions to Qur'ānic studies which deserve mention are: Kabir Jaisi's critique on *tafasir* in Iran: Abdul Aleem's vindication of *I'jaz Al-Qur'an;* Salim Kidwai's Arabic *tafasir* originating from India, Obaidullah Fahad's elucidation of the concept of *naẓm* (coherence) in the Qur'ān and his exposition of the account of the earlier communities in the Qur'ān; Zafarul Islam's methodology of understanding the meaning and message of the Qur'an; Ziauddin Falahi's masterly survey of the Hindu scholars' writings on the Qur'ān, and the valuable additions to Qur'ānic scholarship by the writers wedded to the ideology of *Jamā'at-i Islāmī*.

Compared with the English journal of the Department, the Urdu one, *Majallat 'Ulūm Islāmiyyah* carries a relatively higher number of 26 articles on the Qur'ān, as elucidated by Rahmatullah in his article (pp. 198–207). Of these, the noteworthy ones are Abū Sufyān Iṣlāḥī's study on the literary hallmarks of the Qur'ān, substantiated by instances cited by the great Qur'ān scholar and linguist, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī and Niẓām al-Dīn Iṣlāḥī's on Pluralism, with a pointed reference to cordial social relations with non-Muslims.

It is gratifying that many articles, though of varying quality, have been written by scholars working at the Department. It is hoped they will take up diligently and with a sense of mission the cause of broadening the horizons of Islamic Studies. This mission has assumed greater relevance and urgency all the more against the current backdrop of Islamophobia and neo-Orientalism. The editors are to be complimented for having compiled such a substantial and valuable volume.

Aligarh Muslim University, India **Abdur Raheem Kidwai**

JOURNEY THROUGH THE QURAN: AN OVERVIEW OF ALL 114 CHAPTERS, by Sharif H. Banna. Wales: Claritas Books, 2020. Pp. 536. ISBN: 9781905884094

This book is essentially a handy and very useful tool which provides a conceptual overview of the 114 *Sūrah*s (chapters) of the Holy Qur'ān. For those regular readers of the Holy Qur'ān, this book will enable them to understand the context and significance of each *Sūrah* as well as the important points included in them, hopefully to be practised in their daily life.

For those readers of the Qur'an who rely on English translations, this book will further enhance their understanding and grasp of the key verses of the Qur'ān. It will also enable them 'to appreciate the content, theme and message of each Quranic chapter.'

The key feature of the book are the mind-maps for each *Sūrah* which enables one to mentally picture the main sections and themes contained in it and, thus, allow a better grasp of what one is going to read.

There are also key stories, messages and lessons from the Qur'ān which provide a better and more nuanced understanding of the important messages being transmitted throughout the Qur'ān. They cover many areas of faith, spirituality, knowledge, recommended actions, morality, equality, justice and so on and so forth, which are all very important matters in one's personal spiritual life and worldly matters.

There are also at the end of each chapter lists of Arabic words which frequently occur throughout the Qur'ān. This is an innovative way of getting introduced to Qur'ānic Arabic and hopefully many readers of this book will use it as an entry point to start learning Arabic vocabulary with the intention of reading and understanding the Qur'ān in Arabic.

I found, as a regular reader of the Quran in its various English translations, the *Dictionary of The Holy Quran: Arabic Words - English Meanings (with Notes)* [Noor Foundation International, 2004] useful to further grasp the specific meanings of the various words used in the Qur'ān. No doubt the author's compilation of 1000 Arabic words used in the Qur'ān will further enrich the readers' understanding of the Qur'ān. One can also point out the availability of the *Index cum Concordance for The Holy Quran - A Key to the Holy Quran* (Kitab Bhavan,1993) which will greatly supplement Sharif H. Banna's *Journey Through The Qur'an*.

It is also a good idea to have different English translations of the Holy Qur'ān so that one can delve in and out of them to ascertain how different translators have translated the same Qur'ānic passages. This approach provides a much deeper understanding of the meaning of any particular verse of the Qur'ān. A few translators even provide footnotes to explain why a particular word was used specifically to render an Arabic word. This enables a better understanding of the Qur'ān and also contextualises the overall message being transmitted for the discerning reader of the Qur'ān.

Regular reading of the Qur'ān enables one to probe the deeper meanings of its various verses which, often, one can relate to them in a very personal way. With each reading one has a richer and deeper understanding of the meanings inherent in the verses and, thus, one is able to excavate their rich wisdom and guidance to steer one in one's day to day living.

The author's introductory chapter navigates the reader for the journey through the book itself. This chapter also provides historical snippets and basic facts about the Qur'ān which further enhances the reader's overall understanding of the Holy Book.

The Qur'ānic maxims and verses highlighted in the book provide insight into the different *Sūrah*s. Each *Sūrah* is contextualised under the heading 'period of revelation'. And the virtue of each of them is highlighted through a *ḥadīth* quotation, which increases one's knowledge base of the Qur'ān beyond its immediate text. Each *Sūrah* has Qur'ānic supplications which have been highlighted in a separate section. This will facilitate learning and memorisation.

A detailed index could have further enhanced the usefulness of this navigational tool to the Qur'ān, maybe in future editions the author can consider this suggestion.

The author cites a quote from Khurram Murad: 'It is crucial for you because, as you travel through the Quran, at every step you will be summoned to choose, and commit to Allah. To read the Quran is nothing less than to live the Quran willingly, sincerely, devotedly, and totally. The outcome of your entire life depends on how you heed the call given by God. The journey is therefore decisive for your existence, for mankind and for the future of human civilisation' [*Way To The Qur'an* by Khurram Murad].

The author deserves compliments for this valuable book and one hopes to read many more insightful books written by him in the years to come.

London, UK **Rumman Ahmed**

THE OBJECTIVES OF ISLAMIC LAW: THE PROMISES AND CHALLENGES OF THE MAQĀṢID AL-SHARĪʿA, edited by I. Nassery, R. Ahmed and M. Tatari. Maryland, US: Lexington Books, 2018. Pp. 313. ISBN: 9781498549936

Recent years have seen a resurgence in interest in *maqāṣid* literature. The present collection is a well-structured selection from some of the most prominent authors writing about Islamic jurisprudence and *maqāṣid* in the English language. The articles are based on talks given in 2014 at the University of Panderborn. The book is split into two parts. The first is more historical and theoretical and is entitled, 'Promises'. The second, 'Challenges,' contains practical chapters dealing with the application of *maqāṣid*-style thinking to

contemporary issues. I would like to focus this review on a critique of what I consider to be the glaring problem with contemporary academic engagements with *maqāṣid* from a devoted Muslim's perspective. The *maqāṣid* have been used for the past two decades by certain figures and circles to undermine core teachings of Islam in the name of 'higher-order' thinking or reasoning about the 'true' goals of the Islamic revelation. I use the term 'revelation' intentionally because sacred law is derived directly from Islam's scriptural sources.

As Hashim Kamali's useful introductory chapter demonstrates, *maqāṣid* or 'higher objectives' of law are a series of five (or six) principles that jurists determined religious law was *primarily* aimed at protecting. These *maqāṣid* are derived from a close and critical reading of the primary scriptural texts of Islam, the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. It is essential to understand from the outset this simple point: the *maqāṣid* were read "out" of scriptural tradition as overarching considerations that appeared to bring its various parts together into a harmonious whole. On the other hand, specific teachings of revelation are not read "out" of the *maqāṣid* as the latter are too simple to offer any concrete guidance without being re-infused into discussions operating at the immediate level of primary texts.

Nonetheless, contemporary reformist thought finds great comfort in law-making from the 'higher' position of the *maqāṣid*. There is a fleeting euphoria in seeing the world below oneself and pontificating upon ethical and jurisprudential issues whilst one hovers between five clouds labelled protection of life, lineage, property, faith, and intellect. The problem with these academic law makers is that they do not only see the world of application as beneath themselves but, sadly, the very scriptural foundations their *maqāṣid* were drawn from appear like distant specks in the horizon. Therefore – as this review will expose – they find it remarkably easy to contradict its outward purport with a wave of the hand or turn of the pen.

The most egregious and offensive example of this type of reasoning is Ayesha S. Chaudhry's thirteenth chapter, *How Objective Are the Objectives (Maqāṣid)? Examining Evolving Notions of the Sharīʿah through the Lens of Lineage (Nasl)*. Chaudhry, whose work I have previously reviewed, plays a familiar tune in most of her writings. She argues that precolonial Muslim scholars and jurists upheld a 'patriarchal idealized cosmology.' This means a universe in which God privileges men over women in an absolute sense. She sees her work as part of the emergence of an 'egalitarian idealized cosmology' and its result is to create the 'egalitarian-authoritative dilemma' with historical thought. Chaudhry looks at the problem of protecting lineage, *nasl*, and illustrates what she sees as the dilemma. She rightly mentions that this objective is drawn from the laws

prohibiting adultery and illicit sex because it would cause chaos (she quotes Rāzī): 'men would compete over women for sex; there would be confusion over paternity; men would abandon the support of children; and they would display aggressive and domineering behavior toward women, causing corruption and fighting among people' (p. 265). However, after this cursory look at a sensible explanation for the Islamic prohibition of adultery, Chaudhry takes a sledgehammer to the prohibitions of Islamic law – and basic morality one would add – in the name of egalitarian reform. In a section entitled 'Reforming the Maqāṣid' she mentions the punishment for adultery and then says:

> Assumptions about a gender equal Islam turn this entire legal structure on its head. What is legally permissible in the patriarchal legal structure becomes criminalized in the egalitarian worldview, and what is criminal becomes legal... [S]ex between consenting individuals becomes a moral good. Protecting this right becomes virtuous. Furthermore, the very fact of punishing consenting individuals for their sexual choices becomes abhorrent, and the idea of punishing them corporally with either lashing or stoning is barbaric and immoral. (p. 266)

Aside from the blatant disbelief evinced by these words in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, what kind of reasoning is she using to justify this dismantling of Islam? She explains:

> Scientific advancements, particularly DNA testing, have made the determination of paternity a nonissue... Paternity can be settled with a test, women's entrance into labor markets – despite persistent unequal pay around the globe – means that women are the breadwinners in their families so that they no longer rely on men to provide for their children, and we know that "fee sex" in liberal democracies has not led to any more aggressive and domineering male behavior toward women than in patriarchal societies. (p. 267)

Whilst in principle these arguments may form the kind of logical reasoning non-scriptural law-making is based on, it is entirely blind to the values of submission, worship, and acceptance of God as the final Lawmaker. Moreover, it attempts to use general objectives derived from sacred law to undo that very law, since these objectives *appear* to be protected by something other than God's law. Through the *Sharī'ah* we find that there is really no need for the *Sharī'ah*!

This conclusion is doubly offensive. Muslims do not view their submission to God through His law as a system of shared convenience in which they arrive at concessions with God. Rather it is a means for them to worship Him through servitude and deference to His wisdom in decreeing that things are one way and not another.

So long as academic 'Islam' remains based around roundtables in which offensive calls to dismantling the faith can sit side-by-side with people who, I believe, are sincere believers and researchers in the field but who do not engage in the religious obligation to call out such ideals, then as the Arabs say: let us recite the four *takbīrs* of the *janāzah* prayer (prayer for the deceased) over academic Islam!

EXEGETICAL CROSSROADS: UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE IN JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM IN THE PRE-MODERN ORIENT, edited by G. Tamer, R. Grundmann, A.E. Kattan and K. Pinggéra. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018. Pp. 408. ISBN: 9783110561449

This is a wonderfully diverse and large volume of essays on scriptural exegesis from the perspective of one of the three 'Abrahamic' faiths that include pieces offering a comparative perspective on narratives cutting across multiple traditions. I will limit my review to my area of expertise, Islamic studies, and thereby focus upon those articles I feel qualified to critically comment upon.

1. In *Theological Deadlocks in the Muslim-Christian Exegetical Discourse of the Medieval Orient: Identifying a Historical Meta-Dialogue*, Martin Accad discusses the duality of the textual corruption (*taḥrīf al-lafẓ*) vs. interpretive (*taḥrīf al-maʿnā*) as a meta-dialogue (his term for the "story of the Muslim-Christian dialogical discourse on the issue") between Islam and Christianity. He argues that the allegations of textual corruption led to a 'deadlock' in dialogue, and he sees the only way out of this is the stance of historians like al-Rassī and al-Yaʿqūbī who quoted approvingly some Biblical texts in their writings. This is an interesting move because the author, apparently a committed Christian, is concerned that allegations of textual corruption render dialogue null and void by offering an immediate victory to Islamic claims. However, his suggested resolution is naïve as it is based on an assumption – and quite a sweeping one at that – that partial acceptance of Biblical narratives indicates wholesale endorsement. A more accurate reading, and one with Prophetic roots, involves 'neither

giving lie to nor entirely believing' in Christian and Jewish tradition. Muslim scholars have always used the nuanced approach of denying only what the Qur'ān explicitly denies (e.g. the divinity of Christ), and leaving matters on which our primary texts were silent as an open question. The problem for Accad however is that this position still renders the kind of dialogue committed Christians seek impossible because it is their core belief that must be jettisoned for the Muslim interlocutor to inch any degree closer.

2. Nicolai Sinai's *Two Types of Inner-Qur'ānic Interpretation* involves his examination of what Muslim scholarship terms *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi'l-Qur'ān*. He uses the framework of interpretive expansion and interpretive back-referencing and accepts the Makkan/Madinan division whilst taking for granted the idea that the later revelations resulted in longer verses. Interpretive expansion involves a given passage B playing an interpretive, qualifying, or elucidating role in an earlier passage A (when they are in the same chapter (*Sūrah*)). On the other hand, when A and B are in separate chapters this is termed "interpretive backreferencing". The problems with Sinai's work however are the *massive* assumptions the author simply fails to offer reasons for. Naturally he is not writing as a committed believer, and he views the Qur'ānic corpus as a heavily re-edited text. A sample of his analysis of (84:20–25) will demonstrate this:

> 20 What is the matter with them that they do not believe,
> 21 And that they do not bow down when the Recitation is recited to them?
> 22 No! The Unbelievers are in denial.
> 23 But God knows well what they hide.
> 24 So give them the tidings of a painful punishment.
> 25 Though that will not be so (*illā*) for those who believe and do good deeds. They will have an unfailing reward.

Read in isolation from the final verse, the perspective of the passage is grim: it may well be understood to imply that its audience consists exclusively of unbelievers destined for damnation. Verse 25 modifies this message by explicitly recognizing that a positive response to the Qur'ānic preaching is possible and reassures the addressees that this will entail a corresponding reward (meaning, of course, entrance to paradise). That v. 25 is in fact a later addition is indicated by a number of observations.

First, the verse, coming as it does at the very end of the *Sūrah*, can obviously be removed from its context without leaving behind a gap. Secondly, the length of the verse is more than twice the average length of the *Sūrah*'s remaining verses and thus stands out stylistically. Thirdly, the phrase 'those who believe and do good deeds' (*al-ladhīna āmanū wa-'amilū al-ṣāliḥāt*) tends to occur in *Sūrahs* that are conventionally dated to the Qur'ān's late Makkan and Madinan stages. Even more strikingly, the assertion that 'those who believe and do good deeds' will be given an 'unfailing reward' also occurs in Q 41:8, virtually a doublet of Q 84:25. The overlap suggests that both verses might be roughly contemporary, which would date the addition to Q84 to the later part of Muḥammad's Makkan period. The function of the presumptive addendum is obviously to tone down the exclusively minatory perspective of the original text, which may reflect the emergence of a Qur'ānic community who would naturally have expected to escape damnation. The verse thus plays a role similar to Amos 9:8, namely, to mitigate a statement that, under changed historical circumstances, would have appeared unacceptably, even unintelligibly, harsh (pp. 258–259).

Without offering a lengthy rebuttal I wish to highlight the following problematic implicit assumptions:

i. *The initial audience were all unbelievers destined for damnation*: this is to forget that the Qur'ān is and was recited as an act of worship by believers for whom it is also a source of reflective contemplation.
ii. *Verse 25 is a later addition because it can be removed from its context without leaving behind a gap*. Such a statement is possibly true for any text apart from intentional Revelation. We can either read elided meanings in implicitly, or we have to accept that removal results in a new meaning. However, to maintain the Qur'ān's affirmation of possible forgiveness we would answer, 'No, the verse cannot be removed without leaving a gap *in intended meaning*!'
iii. *Verses that stand out stylistically do not belong in their current places, at least not before they were put there in the 'editorial process.'* This is once again to limit the Qur'ān to styles we assume it can adopt, and to believe that apparent stylistic shifts must equal later addition. Imagine applying that to a Shakespearian dialogue, let alone revelation.
iv. *Verses that are stylistically similar or identical are from the same temporal period*. This might apply to the writing of an unskilled neophyte

who is still coming into his own stylistic voice and so he spends years writing in a certain way before graduating to a higher level. Such an observation is far off the mark for a text whose literary grandeur was unchallenged by its native Arabic audience for over a thousand years.

v. *Quranic addendums appear to tone down the 'harsh' meanings unsuited to a new audience*. This involves two assumptions, not one. The first is that there are new audiences that constantly require a different Qur'ānic message to keep them interested. Second, the new message must suit their refined tastes. It is the job of the editor, like a Netflix director, to make sure his material is now on par with the latest level of woke sensitivity lest the audience deem it too backwards and distasteful.

It is undeniable that works which contain a minefield of assumptions will lose their discerning readership, let alone a committed Islamic audience who are used to the quality of careful linguists like Fāḍil al-Sāmmarā'ī, al-Farāhī, and al-Shinqīṭī to name only some modern scholars.

3. *Moses, Son of Pharaoh: A Study of Qur'ān 26 and its Exegesis* is the eyebrow-raising title of Gabriel Said Reynolds' study of the Qur'ānic account of Moses as the adopted child of Pharaoh. Reynolds notes that the Pharaoh Moses confronts after his return from Midian is the same one whose household he was raised in as a child, whilst in Exodus it is Pharaoh's daughter who finds Moses and adopts him, and it is another Pharaoh who he confronts after his return from Midian – the previous one being already dead. Reynolds then argues that 'the Qur'ānic author does not understand Pharaoh to be a title at all. In the Qur'ān Fir'awn is simply the *name* of the ruler of Egypt in the time of Moses (accordingly the ruler in the time of Joseph must be referred to otherwise.)' Like Sinai, Reynolds assumes the Qur'ān to be the literary product of a somewhat ignorant author, whilst it appears that he is the one guilty of ignorance of the fact that at the time of Joseph it was *impossible* for the ruler to be termed 'Pharaoh.' This is because Joseph lived in the period of Egypt's dynastic, not Pharaonic, rule, at the time of the Hyksos invasion.

   As for the claim that Fir'awn is understood as a proper noun, this is not to be found in any Islamic exegetical or historical source.

   Most troubling however is Reynold's main argument that the Qur'ān diverged from the Biblical narrative of the relationship between Pharaoh and Moses so that it can make the "drama" of Q 26 'a family reunion, in

illustrating how Moses chose God over his own father.' Reynolds wishes to turn this narrative somewhat into something like the story of Ibrāhīm and Āzar though he fails for two reasons. One, nowhere does Moses refer to Pharaoh as his father nor does he act like a son towards him. Second, there was hardly a choice here of father over God. The divinely-guided Messengers are not presented in the Qur'ān as challenged with such decisions, rather it is the ordinary believers who are exhorted to take the leap:

> Thou wilt not find any people who believe in God and the Last Day, loving those who resist God and His Apostle, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has written Faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein. God will be well pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of God. Truly it is the Party of God that will achieve Felicity. (Qur'an 58:22)

Dubai, United Arab Emirates **Karim Gabor Koscenda**

Contemporary Muslim World

THE ARCHITECTURE OF A DECCAN SULTANATE. By Pushkar Sohoni. London: I.B. Tauris, 2018. Pp. 289. ISBN: 9780755606795.

Recognition of truth's complicity with power is the default mode of political debate today. Nobody disregards the fact that the paramount role of public discourses is to buttress the ideology of the state (or to challenge it). It has also been long recognized that Mission and Empire, colonialism and 'civilizing mission', or indeed the pairing of *dīn* with *dawlah*, in our own tradition, represent two sides of a single historical reality. Regime changes, we are also fully aware, result in epistemic paradigm shifts. Thus, when a contemporary scholar laments the 'Loss of Hindustan' (Manan Ahmed Asif, London, 2020.), he unapologetically admits that 'the colonized face a diminished capacity to represent their past in categories other than those given to them in a European language, or provided to them by the imperial archive. This rupture, brought about by the colonial episteme, erases the full memory or awareness of the precolonial.' Little wonder that his research focuses on the changing modes of historiography, for the discipline of history, itself a colonizing tool, as Asif recognizes, is resistant to the demands of the colonized. Historians are the real ideologues of a political order and the guardians of its legitimizing narratives. Thus, when Europeans sought to promote a vision of Indian history that was more conducive to their colonizing project, they divided it according to their own tripartite scheme, into Hindu (Ancient), Muslim (Medieval) and British (Modern) periods, and by so doing, egregiously 'communalized' it. For some, the seeds of the Partition of 1947 were sown by the champions of the colonial ideology, historians of the Raj, who were firm believers in the myth of the white man's superiority and in the boons of 'civilization' through European intervention. The tragic in this farce is the fact that in India this narrative has been internalized by both communities, Hindu and Muslim, though it is nowhere pursued as fanatically and calamitously as in the BJP India. No wonder, historiography has become a veritable intellectual battlefield of Indian politics.

Given the rage of 'revisionist history' in Indian politics and public discourses today, it is not surprising that indigenous academic historians have found themselves on the receiving end of the nationalists' ire, even if it is the Western Indologists, mostly American, who have borne the brunt of the Hindu right's most vicious attacks and slanderous campaigns (Cf: Abu Lilia Sulani: 'Hindutva and History: An Assault on the Academy, *MWBR*, 38:1 (Autumn 2017), pp. 6–20.)

It is therefore no small consolation to discover a very competent academic study by a professional historian that not only shuns all sectarian polemics, often dismissing the nationalist rhetoric with a gentle retort,[1] but which also considerably enriches our understanding of the cultural and aesthetic specificity of the much-neglected civilization of the South (*Dakkhan/Dakshina*).

Hindustan and Dakkhan (Anglicized as Deccan), it needs reiterating, were part of the pre-colonial imagination for expressing one's belonging not only to geography and *patrie* but also to a specific culture and civilization. Though the story of Deccan has been subsumed under the overall history of the North, the putative cradle of Indian civilization, we must be mindful of the distinctive features of Deccan's geography and history. It is also worth emphasizing, for instance, that the South's geography allowed it to have deep connections with West Asia, connections that were completely independent of North India but which account for its autonomous cultural and historical development. Further, the author reminds us, 'the connection between Hindustan and Deccan remained quite tenuous till the early modern period.'

Sohoni's book on the courtly architecture of the Nizam Shahs, we are informed, 'is the first and only survey of its kind.' The Nizam Shahi sultanate of Ahmadnagar (c. 1490–1636 CE), as we know, was the shortest-lived of the three larger Deccan sultanates which all arose as a result of the slow collapse of the Bahmanis around 1500s (The other two being the Adil Shahs of Bijapur and the Qutub Shahs of Golconda). Though its rich material record remained relatively unstudied, the author nevertheless is of the opinion that the trajectory of the Nizam Shahs is 'a key to understanding their role in transmitting an earlier medieval sensibility of kingship until the early modern period ushered in by the Mughals.' It is consistent with the pioneering nature of this work that is a veritable repository of historical facts, an inventory of the remaining monuments, their architectural forms and styles and their overall position in the greater scheme of the history of Deccan. A studious and diligent effort that even includes a lot of photographic documentation. More than an architectural history, it provides a lot of information about coinages, paintings, court literature etc., of the period under review, not to forget that all the inscriptions in various languages including their translations have also been supplied. As for the architectural history proper, it is subdivided into sections dealing with civic buildings 'urban patterns, water supply systems and fortification, religious structures ('mosques: piety and prayer), tombs and miscellaneous buildings. The wealth of detail and attention to individual monuments is really impressive. In short, Sohoni has done the groundwork and laid the foundations for future scholars to work on, all of whom, including

general readers, would be, I am confident, immensely grateful. We must also take note of his frustration when he laments that '[t]he finite resources for architectural history are being decimated, as the few 'protected monuments are being subjected to crude and whimsical repairs carried out or sanctioned by the Archaeological Survey of India.' (The list of historical monuments and other structures that have been converted for modern petty activities, or wilfully neglected and allowed to perish, runs into pages!)

Any reader, academic or casual, of Sohoni's splendid monograph must feel humbled by the enormity of his labour, his scholarly acumen and his gentle humanism. As for the summary of his insights, it is conveyed without a single shrill note:

'An understanding of the Nizam Shahs and the material world that they created and inhabited changes our understanding of the early Maratha state, and disabuses the notion that the latter was a revivalist indigenous state that had no connection with the regional past... The colonialist and nationalist narrative of 'Muslim Invaders' upsetting indigenous practices until the 'Hindu revival' under the Marathas in the seventh century is a simplistic and naïve model of regional history.'

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Note

1. Cf: 'It is now suspected that the Marathas, not the Mughals under Aurangzeb, vandalized the libraries and art in Ahmadnagar. However, Aurangzeb tends to be vilified more easily. P. 80)

JEFFERSON'S MUSLIM FUGITIVES. THE LOST STORY OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS, THEIR ARABIC LETTERS. AND AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT. By Jeffrey Einboden. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. xv+330. ISBN: 9780190844479.

Ira P. Nash (d. 1844), an American land and slave owner of British descent, had, on Sunday, October 3, 1807, sought a private interview in Washington with President Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) over 'a matter of momentous importance' (p. 147). On the following day Nash was able to present to the President two Arabic manuscript writings by anonymous Muslim slaves fleeing their captivity in Kentucky' (p. 7). The two manuscripts as well as a 1750 piece from Georgia all published here for the first time represent the earliest surviving 18th century exemplars of Arabic writings in the newly found

United States (p. 9). The writings by anonymous freedom seekers, indexicalise America's early entanglement with Africa, religion (Islam), slavery, and Arabic literacy. Einboden's interest in archival research has helped in his unearthing of lost Arabic writings by slaves in the South often regarded as 'America's capital of culture.' He advances some reasons for the near neglect and obscurity of the contributions of Muslim slaves in the American cultural legacy. These include physical loss of some of the Arabic writings, obscurity of the surviving bits, partly due to their illegibility, limitations of their Arabic authorship, and the limitedness of their audiences. But for Terry Alford's *Prince among Slaves* [Oxford, OUP, 1977 & 1986] and Allan D. Austin's *African Muslims in Antebellum America* [NY: Garland, 1984; idem], *African Muslims. Transatlantic Stories* [NY: Routledge, 1997], not much has been done to explore and study the literary bequests by enslaved and freed Sudanic African writers from the inchoate stage of the United States. This is a yawning gap that Einboden's effort has come to fill in a spectacular way. Perhaps apposite here is the fact that Jefferson's interest in Islamic cultural bequests, icons, and legacies had some root in his pre-presidential life. In October 1765 he had bought a copy of George Sale's English translation of the Qur'ān (p. 6) and ordered in 1785, among other books, *Poeseos Asiaticae*, a 500–page collection of Arabic and Persian verses by the Anglo-Welsh philologist, William Jones (1746–1794) (p. 67).

Beyond the historical traction of the manuscripts presented in this volume as an iconic representation of the American literary legacy from the early history of the Union, Einboden also gives fresh insights into the efforts and characters of some early cultivators of the Arabic-Islamic culture in the US.

One of such was Ezra Stiles (1727–1795), a 'diligent student of the Qur'ān... and one of the few Arabists in the new State who, as the President of Yale University in 1781, gave a Commencement Address in Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Arabic (p. 34). Stiles is also reported to have been receiving, between 1786–87, letters that were authored in Arabic by Muslim slaves in the New World. In support is an entry dated August 17, 1787 in his personal diary which reads: 'Captain Todd presented me with four specimens of Negro writing in Arabic, written by four Negro slaves in Trinidad in the West Indies, who were brought from the Fouile [Fula] Nation in Africa... I find I can read it; it being written in fair Arabic Characters; & begins بسم الله الرحم (sic). Two of them are Mahometans & two Pagans, but all educated to write the Arabic' (p. 38). This particular statement provides a fresh insight into the narrative on the early American interface with the Islamic cultural bequest *à la* transatlantic slavery. Firstly, it indicates that by the second half of the 18th century, American/Western public and military personnel had access to, and perhaps also some remarkable

familiarity with, slave writings in Arabic, whatever the subject matter of such writings. Secondly, negroes with corrupted Arabic-Islamic or native names who could write Arabic were presumed to be pagans by their Western discussants. Non-Muslim West Africans could not have mastered Arabic to the level of employing it for authorship, if at all they ever ventured to acquire the skill, and any suggestion to the contrary, even if remotely, is hardly demonstrable or verifiable. It may be noted in passing that the 1786 Treaty in Arabic (for which a few English translations were made subsequently) was the first the US will sign 'with a Muslim power', the Emperor of Morocco.

Yet another significant figure was Stiles's student at Yale and a Church minister, Abiel Holmes (1763–1837). He described the Futa Jalon born enslaved 'Usman whom he had met on the Plantation as 'a great literary curiosity' (p. 32) who had, on February 21, 1788, penned some Qur'ānic (petitionary) passages (p. 51) which Holmes characterized as the outcry of an enslaved negro 'suffering brutal inequalities' (p. 56). The exemplar which is published here for the first time represents the earliest extant Arabic writing by a slave in post-independence US. The whole of Chapter Six of the work under review is on 'Usman (pp. 55–63). He is said to have been raised 'in a Muslim region famed for scholarship... memorizing Qur'anic chapters [and] trained not merely to recite this sacred text orally, but to write in elegant lines' (p. 56).

'Usman's writings as available in 1788 to Stiles the 'avid Arabist' (p. 167) inspired the Yale University President to further develop an interest in Arabic materials. The second extant Arabic writing authored by 'Usman, a 31–line prayer formula also being published here for the first time (p. 58), deserves a deeper study for a variety of reasons as an exemplar of late 18th century Arabic authorship in the New World. Holmes got the manuscript in 1790, his wedding year, from 'Usman. Could this have been a marriage gift or nuptial benediction (*barakah*)? Samuel Brown Wylie (1773–1852) is another important Pennsylvania Ivy League professor who was spurred into intensive engagement with Arabic through interaction with the two anonymous Arabic Manuscripts by the Kentucky 'captives'. In his view, the Arabic manuscripts were not written by 'ignorant men' but were produced by 'authors capable of teaching even an Ivy League professor' (p. 167). Edward Everett (1794–1865) is yet another iconic figure discussed by Einboden, not least for being the first to receive the first recorded Arabic missive that was written on October 3, 1826 by Ibrāhīm 'Abd al- Raḥmān (d. 1838). This letter in Arabic made Ibrāhīm the most celebrated Muslim slave in the United State, as it contains some Qur'ānic formulae along with a plea for his release from slavery. Everett's assessment of 'Abd al-Raḥmān is very insightful; he is described as 'an African Prince' (p. 225) who 'embodied an African ideal, one unsurpassed by Western peers' (p. 239).

An important issue in the American literacy legacy which the title under review has adumbrated, albeit superficially, relates to reverse A'jami/zation, that is, adapting Latin scripts for Arabic letters not found in Indo-European languages. (Cf. Fallou Ngom, *Muslims beyond the Arab World. The Odyssey of 'ajamī and the Murīdiyya* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2016]; Fiona Mc Laughlin, "*Ajami* writing practices in Atlantic-speaking Africa" [in F. Lüpke, ed. *The Oxford Guide to the Atlantic Languages of West Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2021), forthcoming]. It is insightful to note that the French Orientalist and linguist, Comte de Volney (1757–1820) had, in his 1794 *Simplification des langues orientales*, addressed the problem of orthographical rendering in Latin script of Arabic letters that are not found in European languages.

In spite of the fact that the obscurity into which slave writings were forced, perhaps unintentionally, in the stereotypical fashion of *Delenda est Carthago* (Carthage must be destroyed as must all legacies of negritude), this effort by Einboden has made it possible for us to decipher and relive a dead story. It has offered a new vista to the narrative on slave writings and their impact on the American society from the pre-Modern period. The author has offered to the academic and general readership a well-researched masterpiece 'of historical recovery' (p. 249). A significant byproduct of this work is the improvement in the Western estimation of Arabic as not only a vehicle of liturgy, but also 'a marker of high culture in Muslim West Africa' (p. 150). The author has eloquently portrayed the interplay between specific American political undercurrents, especially during the early history of the US with the African representation of the Islamic culture in the North and West African regions from the 18th century onward. Moreover, this work has also given a fair reconstruction of the nature and depth of intellectual exertions by enslaved Africans and their impact on the socio-cultural cosmos of the emerging new United States of America.

Fountain University, Nigeria **Amidu Olalekan Sanni**

ISLAM IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS SINCE THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION. By Bayram Balci. London: Hurst and Company, 2018. Pp. 248. ISBN: 9781849049689.

The book offers insights into the internal and external dynamics of how the prospects of Islam's revival in Central Asia and Caucasia have experienced a sort of mutation in the thirty years since those states gained independence.

When the USSR crumbled in 1991, neighbouring and regional powers were eager to explore the possibilities of religious influence for several Islamic currents ensuing from Iran, Turkey, Egypt and beyond. Initially, Central Asian leaders avidly attempted to gauge where these currents might lead, but were soon held back by their urge to guard against exposure to them beyond certain limits. Well within the very first decade of independence, their exploration and experimentation went through a range of phases from rediscovery, to reorientation, to subsequent recalculation and eventually to efforts to resist Islamic revivalism (pp. 188–189). Their self-proclamation as part of Islam's glorious and enlightened past remains 'selective [and] corresponding to specific political motives and objectives' (p. 2).

Since the early years of independence, Central Asian authorities have introduced measures that created a specific form of Islam in each of those countries reflecting the new authorities' preferred markers referring to Muslim culture and tradition. Religion was adapted to fit the evolving ideological choices and the national ideology to create a new identity (pp. 188–189). Uzbekistan took back the control and organization of society in all its spheres including the religious (p. 115). This pattern is not exclusive to any one country for, in varying degrees, it may also be observed in other states of the region. Uzbekistan serves as a glaring example of how the country restructured the ideological and identitarian reference points and how, although still composed of cadres from Soviet times, it took back control and the running of the society while redefining the do's and don'ts in the sphere of religion (pp. 114–115).

The authorities in the Central Asian states felt the urge to insulate their citizens from the ideological influences of religious trends. Balci mentions the instruments developed to impede the integration of influences initiated by Turkey, due to which early dynamism in effectively exporting a Turkish Muslim discourse floundered (p. 51). The book introduces us to the mechanism for manipulating memory with regard to past morals, ethics and values. This involved resorting to a selective reading of religion and only permitting a strictly sterilized interpretation that in its turn reflect an approach which is fuelled by fear, fanned by frenzy and fed by fantasy. Regulations were drafted to retard any rigorous form of religion particularly those calling for a return to the roots as a remedy for its retardation (p. 129).

While Tehran took a keen interest in its northern neighbours, Iranian efforts met no great success in overcoming obstacles they encountered primarily due to negative perceptions vis-à-vis them which still persists. Those who inherited the Soviet reflexes of self-protection remain averse to any kind

of influence and interference from outside and, hence, for them upholding secularism is still considered a safeguard. This explains why Iran's policy of religious cooperation made no headway in either Central Asia or Caucasia, as Balci explains (p. 91).

The author offers 'a nuanced retrospective analysis of Arab influences' in general, and Saudi influence in particular, which the author says will help disentangle legend from the reality of how far Wahhabism actually managed to expand into Central Asia. He notes that, among the authorities, especially in Uzbekistan, there was resistance to forms of religious rigidity especially those from Saudi Arabia which were labelled as an embodiment of obscurantism and feudalism (p. 107). Such a perception led to imposing restrictions on those travelling to Makkah for the *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage). These were aimed at controlling the circulation of citizens, their minds and interactions and, above all, at immunising themselves against the 'contagion of subversive ideas' so that Makkah should not serve as a location for 'the creation of an international Muslim public consensus' (p.107). There was also the fear that pilgrims may return 'infected and fanaticized' with pan-Islamic ideals that were fashionable those days. Resultantly, the Middle East-based diaspora of Uzbeks gradually desolidarized and disinterested themselves as they became disillusioned by their inability to withstand the stance of an Uzbek government striving to damp down any religious revivalism (p. 140).

For most Central Asian states, the scarecrow of a domestic extremist threat remains subject to 'facile political exploitation, justifying repressive religious policies' (p. 188), writes Balci, pointing out that the majority of religious actors in Central Asia and Caucasia not only condemn, but also distance themselves, from extremism in all its forms and instead advocate apolitical moderation and pacifism.

This book serves as a useful reading regarding the restructuring and reorganization of the religious sphere in Central Asia and the Caucasus since their independence in 1991. With an analysis that is clinical in approach, precise in description and empirical in evidence, the author provides poignant perspectives on how the pursuit of religious outreach has fared so far. He presents the readers with empirical knowledge to convey an understanding of both the aspirations and apprehensions with which Central Asian and Caucasian leaders have pursued religious diplomacy with neighbouring and regional Muslim states.

London, UK **Najam Abbas**

TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM: A COMPREHENSIVE INTRODUCTION TO ACTORS AND ACTIONS. By Henry Prunckun and Troy Whitford. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publications. Inc., 2019. Pp. 275. ISBN: 9781626377608.

Terrorism and terrorists are associated with the use of violence and force to attain some desired goals. The issue may seem very simple, however not only is it very complex, it is also highly confusing and involves an ethical judgment at every step. An obvious example of this is Nelson Mandela who is often hailed as a hero who fought for the rights of the South African people. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. But Nelson Mandela was also involved in the 1983 Church Street car bombing that killed 19 people. The question here is: was Nelson Mandela a terrorist at the time of the said car bombing or a liberation activist? Can killing of 19 noncombatant civilians be justified on any ethical grounds?

After grappling with this complex issue, the UN has tried to differentiate between the right of a people to liberate themselves from the oppressive rule of a dictatorial racist regime and the use of violent means to achieve a political goal (p. 20). [An obvious example not mentioned in the book is the use of coercive state power by the Indian armed forces in the I.O.K., where the native Muslim majority is facing brutalities at the hands of the Indian military].

The authors refer to the UN's recognition of the inalienable right of a people to self-determination specifically when under colonial or dictatorial racist regimes. It makes political violence justifiable when a clear distinction is made between civilian and armed combatants. Attacks can only be directed at military objectives (p. 20). It is resolved by the UN that attacking civilians and non-military targets constitutes terrorism. 'Given this perspective one may argue that an indiscriminate military bombing of cities or towns may also be an act of state-sanctioned terrorism' (p. 20). This theoretical truism regarding the UN's position on terrorism and people's struggle for self-determination becomes a mockery when one looks critically at the practical violations of the UN's own principles in several examples of state sanctioned terrorism, such as the indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Iraq, Syria and recently Gaza.

The authors also review the just war theory which sets conditions for any armed conflict on moral grounds. Seven such principles are quoted: '(1) the war must have a just cause; (2) it must be fought with the right intentions; (3) the harm caused in war must be proportionate to the good achieved; (4) it must have reasonable prospects of success; (5) it must be initiated and faced by a legitimate authority; (6) individuals must discriminate between

legitimate and illegitimate targets and attack only legitimate targets which means no harm to the noncombatants and; (7) harm caused through war must be proportionate to the military advantage gained' (p. 21). The authors are fair enough in reporting the just war theory, but their application of these principles in the case of Boko Haram seem out of place. They are nevertheless correct in maintaining that legislation and punishment alone can never stop any terrorist activities. However, what is terrorism and what is not, apparently, is subject to who is making an ethical judgment and on whom.

The book consists of three parts with 15 chapters, and like a textbook, each chapter provides at its end study questions and learning activities along with endnotes. This well documented and comprehensive study covers terrorism from a wide range of angles.

Radicalization is defined by the authors as an attempt to undermine or reject existing accepted norms which, by any standards, is not something bad and causes no threat or danger to civil society. But what makes it a threat is the use of violent means to change society (p. 51).

What motivates a terrorist, or a group of terrorists, is summarized by the authors in four reasons: (1) the urge for separation; (2) ethnocentric considerations; (3) nationalistic ideology; (4) the desire to bring in a revolution. Separatists, in the authors' view, want to achieve religious or political autonomy, 'the most well-known example of a separatist struggle is that between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East' (p. 52). It is difficult to understand how the authors disregard over one thousand five hundred years of native Palestinian presence in the region. How can the subjugation of the native Palestinians by an ethnocentric Zionist group, who migrated from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, be justified? And how can forceful ejection of the Palestinians from their homeland be allowed to happen? On what ground can they ever be called separatists? It is also a historical fallacy to say that '... the state of Israel was established in 1948 by a United Nation's resolution that divided British Palestine into Jewish and Arab states" (p. 53).

The Balfour Declaration paved the way for the illegitimate creation of the state of Israel. 'The Balfour declaration was an astonishing document for the British to issue. At the time it was published (Nov. 19, 1917, The Times of London), Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire. It was not Britain's, to dispose of, one way or another' (See M.E. McMillan, *From the First World War to the Arab Spring what's really is going on in the Middle East,* PalgraveMcMillan, London, 2016, p. 139).

The authors also confirm the direct involvement of external stakeholders in the rise of radicalism in different regions of the world. 'The Red Mosque in

Pakistan is an example of how places of worship can be places of radicalization. Initially established and funded by the United States, The Red Mosque was both a place of worship and a recruitment facility for those fighting Russians in Afghanistan. After hostilities between Russia and Afghanistan, the leadership of the Red Mosque pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden and brought *shari'ah* law to Pakistan' (p. 61). In other words, it was a state-sponsored terrorist activity in which the US was fully involved. Their bringing *Sharī'ah* laws to Pakistan does not make any sense in this context.

The solution of the authors to this menace revolves around the initial strategies used by the US. The idea was based on the *crime triangle theory*, consisting of an object or victim, criminal desire, or ability to commit a crime, and opportunity. The authors recommend depriving the terrorists of financial and human rights in order to make the triangle ineffective. '[O]n a technical scale, it could be argued that through systematic attacks on terrorist financial bases (e.g. seizing their assets and where applicable, cutting them off from state sponsors of terrorists), liberal democracies can strip extremists of their ability to purchase arms and explosives (and the means to deploy both) thus reducing them to mere radicals spouting fanatical dogma' (pp. 247–248). In other words, the genie cannot be put back into the bottle but can only be made less harmful!

Riphah International University, Pakistan **Anis Ahmad**

THE DICTATORSHIP SYNDROME. By Alaa Al Aswany (translated by Russell Harris). London: Haus Publishing Ltd, 2019. Pp. 171. ISBN: 9781912208593.

The role of intellectuals is not confined to speaking truth to power but extends to voicing concerns that will empower people to think and ponder beyond the government propaganda. Every government has its own propaganda machinery that tries to control the masses, shape their opinions, construct enemies, justify wars and blame others for all the ills and problems of the nation. This requires huge management by the regime to deny people access to what is really happening. The masses of common people who are struggling with their day-to-day mundane routines have very little time, leisure, resources or potential to face the narrative of the power or regime ruling them. Regimes employ different tactics in their propaganda such that the message of the latter becomes mainstream and every dissenting voice is punished or permanently silenced. This happens in all regimes, but it is manifested brutally in totalitarian

and dictatorial regimes. The official narrative of dictatorial regimes when challenged is severely suppressed with an iron fist.

The trajectory of dictatorship from Nazism to our times has shared similar features which have been studied and analysed. It has been justly stated that dictatorship is the worst form of governance and should be abolished for the sake of the collective wellbeing of society. However, regimes have justified dictatorship under various pretexts and even the champions of democracy and economic and national interests have looked the other way. The United Nations as a world body has not played an active role in condemning the dictatorships of the world and imposing sanctions over them. Moreover, there are apologists for dictatorship who always justify it, by observing that the masses do not deserve democracy as they cannot handle it. Most Muslim countries, particularly in the Middle East, are ruled by dictatorial regimes. Democratic transitions in most cases have been brutally stalled by military dictators often in compliance with the world powers like the US.

As a novelist and intellectual, Alaa Al Aswany has been puncturing holes in the official narrative of the dictatorial regimes of the Middle East, particularly Egypt. In this new book, his criticism of what he terms the "Dictatorship Syndrome" is manifested eloquently. Al Aswany is the author of the bestselling novels *The Yacoubian Building* and *The Automobile Club of Egypt* which have been translated into major languages. While deliberating on the fundamental argument of the book, Al Aswany writes, 'dictatorship is a disease that represents a danger to humanity and must be dealt with. The first step in the treatment of any disease is to study its causes, the circumstances of its emergence and the symptoms and complications it gives rise to in both the people and the dictator. This is what we will do in this book' (pp. 12–13).

The book offers an explanation of how the Egyptian people and society face the dictators and the adjustments they make to help them survive. It is part of their resilience mechanism too for coping up with brutal regimes. Al Aswany explains how propaganda in the six-day Arab-Israeli war of 1967 played out in Egypt when the local media was blaring that Egypt under the leadership of General Nasser will defeat Israel. It is one of his childhood memories and initial encounter with the dictatorship syndrome. Those who intended to oppose the regime were ousted by a petty clerk, hence depriving them of their source of livelihood. This is coupled further with creating an atmosphere of fear and the construction of enemies so that any opposition and dissent is destroyed while punishing the innocents becomes the norm. This atmosphere of fear along with punishment creates 'good citizens' which helps to prolong the dictatorship. The 'good citizens' and dictator are the

two sides of the same coin, because if the 'good citizens' stop being 'good', the days of the dictator are numbered.

Dictators are megalomaniacs and narcissists who wrongly believe that they are the sole embodiments and upholders of the truth. They have this urge to make people accept their narrative as the only gospel truth. This urge explains their control over the press and media because independence of the media will certainly upset their narrative. Conspiracy theories are also given legitimacy, which helps thwart any revolutionary tendencies and leanings among the masses, resulting in the destruction of freedom and democracy. All these tactics give rise to a fascist mind-set which is then perpetuated through debts and jobs, because the state controls everything. Any dissent can lead to the pauperization of the dissident.

Al Aswany offers insights into the role of intellectuals in a dictatorship and how they behave as dwarfs. Intellectuals are not a monolith and they behave and negotiate things in different ways, just as there are mechanisms about how they justify dictators. As the role of the intellectuals is diminished, the latter accept their fate, curtail their activities and exist at the periphery, carrying out their mundane affairs while trying to forget about their real role in society.

Al Aswany also holds the tribal culture among most Muslim countries responsible for the dictatorship syndrome. Religion has been always exploited by the dictators to perpetuate their power. Charisma, religion and religious leaders have been used by dictators to stay in power and legitimize their atrocious misrule by camouflaging it in the garb of religion. Al Aswany is critical of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic revivalist movement, but at the same time tries to shy away from the fact that this movement has always resisted military dictatorship in Egypt, thus suffering at their hands persecution, assassination and long incarcerations. Islam has certainly been exploited by dictators but it has also fuelled resistance against them. The power of religion in resisting dictators therefore should not be dismissed or discounted. Al Aswany is not oblivious of the fact that torture, inferiority complex and treating Muslims as second class citizens in European and Western countries has fuelled terrorism as a reaction.

Overall, the book is a serious attempt to understand the causes, complexes and conundrums of dictatorship. Al Aswany has critically analysed the variegated contours of dictatorship even though his criticism of the Islamic revivalist movements seems to be exaggerated while their role in resisting dictatorship has not been highlighted adequately.

Srinagar, Kashmir **Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander**

WOMEN IN ISLAM: WHAT THE QUR'AN AND SUNNAH SAY. By Abdur Raheem Kidwai. Markfield: Kube Publishing, 2020. Pp. 180. ISBN: 9781847741400.

If one has to imagine the most popular and representative print/electronic media photograph of Muslims as an *Ummah,* then undoubtedly it is that one of the Eid congregational prayer: a sight of equality, solidarity and centrality exhibited by the common man who will burst on the streets in a few moments after completing the prayer. This being the very character of Islam from which emanates every other ritual accoutrement. How great of this religion to treat all its followers equally: rich or poor, black or white, irrespective of caste, class or creed. But an odd question pinches the reader partaking of what the mainstream media dishes out for it. Why do the Muslims play with half the team? While the men – regardless of their status and background, comprise such a glorious picture of the *Ummah,* the reader is quick to imagine, that the women slave in front of stoves, sweat washing and scrubbing their homes and remain subjugated in domesticity. Next, a public opinion is generated and ossified over the centuries, imputing Islam with discrimination on the basis of sex and leaving women powerless and voiceless in society.

Hence the general belief that women are very oppressed in Islam. The book under review book counters such general belief from a scriptural purview. Arranged over three distinct sections, it practically puts in one place all the evidence indicating the equal status of women, if not in the eyes of the eventual Muslim societies after the advent of Islam then at least in the eyes of the Creator and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as construed in the Holy Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*s.

The first section of the book is a collection of Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic sayings. Any verse that addresses women or has a direct or indirect reference to women is included. Equal rewards are promised for men and women in all verses cited. The second section is a short 21-page account in two distinct articles on believing and disbelieving women in the Qur'ān. This is the only section where one can discern the author's own perspective, as compared to the other two sections which are a collection of sourced passages and verses. Nonetheless, the author's perspective and stance on this very contentious issue is unequivocally elucidated in the crisp preface that no matter what corruption seeped into Islamic societies that has befogged the true status of women in Islam, the authentic religious texts do not discriminate between the

sexes. Their roles and niches may not be identical in the hyper-volume of an Islamic habitat, because, in the eyes of Allah masculinity does not supersede diversity by overriding femininity.

The last section is an account of women narrators of *Ḥadīth*. This includes lists of the names of the Prophet's wives, the Mothers of Believers, and some key accounts from the *al-Muḥaddithāt* pertaining to women Hadith narrators. Though this is the shortest section of the book it is not to be implied that it remains wanting in broader range. Being the last one it is followed by an Index of Qur'ānic passages, a bibliography and a comprehensive index of subjects.

However, the tone of narrative needs to be absolved a bit of a medieval baggage better put as the Tiara or Doormat Syndrome. Much as well as the book is an earnest effort in allaying the charges of the subjugation of women in Islam, it should not make Islam as if it puts a tiara on the head of every woman. The opening paragraph of the preface rightly uses words like equality and dignity for the status of women in Islam. But these are followed by expressions such as 'exalted status' in the same vein, which only encumbers the ordinary woman further, akin to the discomfort she feels in a subservient and subdued position. Unrealistic societal expectation of piousness and power from a woman as witnessed in her deification in pagan cultures does no good to her. The latter is actually a form of oppression and all that Muslim societies need to do is to accord her in tandem with the Qur'ānic injunctions a status of equal but not identical position with men. This would rather let her rise beyond being a mere mother, wife or daughter figure and allow her to claim her right to education and inheritance for filling the vacuum of economic and social empowerment. None of this contradicts Islamic teachings as detailed in this book.

The foremost merit of the book is its simplicity of presentation and articulation adapted not only as a style but as a virtue, much to the benefit of the reader and ultimately to the scholarly rebuttals of misconceptions about women and Islam. For instance, one of the most referred to verses of the Qur'ān that helps us insinuate the equal status of men and women is *al-Aḥzāb* (35: 33). In his translation, Kidwai takes some liberty in favour of the English reader with one rearrangement of the last phrase. The last one comes first and then follow the nine masculine and feminine attributes harkening the Ummah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to do good and be good and be rewarded. Also in the same instance, the nine bullet points bring in more structure and clarity. Nonetheless, this arrangement of phrases within the verses is not to be construed as a disloyalty to the original text. It is instead a

welcome outcome of in-depth scholarship and vast experience in instructional science that the author has built upon over decades.

The question of Islam and women is settled once more with deserved diligence without any attempt at retrofitting the original message of Islam with apologetic interpretations. The author and the publishers must be commended for their effort.

Aligarh Muslim University, India **Faiza Abbasi**

Philosophy, Theology and Sufism

A SUFI APOLOGIST OF NĪSHĀPŪR: THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF ABŪ ʿABD AL-RAḤMĀN AL-SULAMĪ. By S.Z. Chowdhury. Sheffield, UK and Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2017. Pp. ix + 228. ISBN: 9781781795224.

In this learned monograph we meet one of a select category of Muslim scholars whose writings not only presented the science of Sufism to spiritual seekers but also represented it to others in such a manner as to defend the practitioners of the Path against the accusations of deviation, or even of heresy, often levelled against them. Al-Sulamī (325–412/937–1021), a major figure in the development and exposition of Sufi teachings, hailed from Nīshāpūr in Khurāsān, northeastern Iran. That ancient city, the region's metropolis and a hub of trade and learning, flourished anew during the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries under the Ṭāhirid (205–278/821–891) and Sāmānid dynasties, which maintained *de facto* independence from the caliphate in Baghdad. S.Z. Chowdhury's illuminating study is the first to investigate in depth his subject's important role in the development and exposition of the science of *Taṣawwuf*. In particular, it demonstrates how al-Sulamī furthered the work of his apologist predecessors by means which included compiling a corpus of sayings of the early Sufis and finding *isnād*s, or chains of transmission, for them.

In Chapter 1 the author surveys and assesses the principal studies (in Arabic or in European languages) wholly or partly devoted to Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī and his work, including a four-volume critical edition of his treatises from Iran and a rare and important 5th/11th century manuscript in Riyadh. Chapter 2 first sets the scene in geographical and historical terms, and then delineates the sociopolitical, intellectual and religious background to al-Sulamī's life and career and his understanding and exposition of Sufism. Nīshāpūr had already long been a major centre for *Ḥadīth* transmission and studies when the city witnessed, at the end of the 4th/10th century, a massive increase in scholarship and *Ḥadīth* and other Islamic sciences. (As is well known, many of the great *Muḥaddithūn* who compiled the canonical *Ḥadīth* corpuses were from Khurāsān or Transoxania.) Chowdhury demonstrates the existence of connections between al-Sulamī and, for instance, both Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Imam al-Shāfiʿī.

The movements and individuals that significantly impacted Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's thought are analysed in the third chapter. As the author puts

it, 'Al-Sulamī represents an intersection of intellectual and mystical strands, both kinds of which shaped his characterization of Sufism.' Among them were the 'orthodox' strain (the others are not mentioned here) of Malāmatī Sufis, a movement very much associated with Nīshāpūr. Though they went out of their way to attract blame and criticism, rather paradoxically they played a significant role in the thought of their apologist fellow-citizen and received ample attention as well as famous names like al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Yaḥyā ibn Muʿādh al-Rāzī. Another flourishing social and spiritual movement at the time was that of *Futuwwah*, the cultivation of chivalrous ethics and selfless service, a topic tellingly expounded by al-Sulamī in his *Kitāb al-Futuwwah*, which is probably the best-known work in Arabic on the subject. A whole monograph could be written on the subject matter of Chapter 3 alone; but the author conveys the essential elements of a complex picture in thirty pages.

Chapter 4 focuses on the (largely fragmentary) extant biographical information on al-Sulamī as well as his teachers and students, and also surveys the reception and assessment of his work and its reliability by later Muslim scholars. Little is said about his travels, which were fairly extensive but again little seems to be known. Chowdhury uses concrete examples to defend his subject against the accusations of plagiarism and of citing inauthentic *ḥadīth*s made by al-Sulamī's detractors. It may also be said that authors whose mission includes the work of systematising a branch or branches of knowledge – al-Ghazālī being another example – are always vulnerable to this charge. The next chapter, again the fruit of much diligent research, presents a categorised descriptive listing of al-Sulamī's writings, with brief descriptions of each one and observations on their manuscript sources where known. Here the reader is shown the range and diversity of his output, which covers subjects ranging from Qur'ānic commentary (his *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr* was a major contribution, of which Gerhard Böwering has traced nearly fifty manuscripts) to *ḥadīth*s, the mystical significance of the Arabic letters, many other aspects of Sufi doctrine and praxis, ethics and government, biography, law, anecdotes, and poetry. Clearly it was not Chowdhury's aim to produce a massive tome like those produced by some researchers; nevertheless Chapter 5 – and perhaps others – may leave some readers wishing that he had gone into more detail in describing the content of some of al-Sulamī's numerous writings, and perhaps offered more brief sample passages by way of illustration.

Because of the eclectic tendencies in al-Sulamī's writing it is no simple matter to identify which of the views on mystical terms and concepts found in his treatises are his own. Chapter 6 unravels these by drawing on *Darajāt al-muʿāmalāt* (Ascending Steps of Spiritual Interactions), a treatise which the

author himself describes as having been written in response to a request that he expound his own view in summary form. Thus we learn not only what al-Sulamī meant by each term but also what were his views on related subjects. He states in the *Darajāt* that Sufism comprises four elements: rules (*ādāb*), character (*akhlāq*), states (*aḥwāl*), and dispensations (*rukhaṣ*); in another work, however, the fourth element is given as *mujāhadāt* (forms of spiritual striving). In any case, this chapter should prove very helpful to readers who are more, or also, interested in other Sufi thinkers. Chapter 7 outlines the methodology advocated by al-Sulamī for the purification and refinement of the soul, as expressed in his works *Fuṣūl fī al-taṣawwuf* and *Sulūk al-ʿārifīn*. Key topics include how to understand the characteristics of the *nafs* (lower soul, ego) and overcome them; the initial, purgative, stage of the Path in which the *nafs* is divested of its faults; the illuminative stage, in which there are ascending states and levels of suprasensory cognition; and the unitive stage, in which the seeker attains *maʿrifah* (gnosis), closeness to God, and intimate discourse with Him. In his conclusion Chowdhury sums up his main findings and al-Sulamī's approach to the defence of Sufism; he also outlines possible avenues for further research.

Further evidence of the author's diligence is the copious bibliography. There is also an index which includes terms as well as proper names but is not altogether satisfactory. Typos are few, but one is left wondering about the full title of a work cited on p. 89 as *Siyāq Tārīkh al*. The index is inconsistent in the selection of terms: sometimes the Arabic one is selected, sometimes the English. Numerous terms and names are missing, a few examples being *walī* (and 'saint' too), *rukhṣah*, *sharīʿah*, *tajrīd*, *walāyah*; Herat, Jurjān, Shīrāz; Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār, Muḥammad al-Shaybānī. Junayd is misplaced after 'jurisprudence', and there is no sign of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, the great theologian and jurist, either before or after him. It is unusual for a work on Sufism to have only three page numbers for occurrences of the word 'heart' (all under *qalb*); admittedly there is also one under the little-known (and oddly hybrid) term 'cardiognosia'.

In the bibliography, too, some details have gone astray here and there. For example, the publication in which Paul Nwyia's article on Ḥallāj appeared is not named; also, two text editions by Nwyia are also included, but they have been misplaced between works by Guy Le Strange and by Michael Lecker. Also, in the titles of works in Persian the *iẓāfah* is incorrectly romanised as *-ī* rather than *-i*. As for Arabic grammar, the omission of the definite article *al-* before the first noun (*ism*) would, strictly speaking, change the meaning of Ibn al-ʿArabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, or 'Meccan Illuminations', to 'The Illuminations of the Meccan Woman.' The same applies analogously, this time

with unfavourable implications, to *nafs al-ammārah bi-al-sū'*; incidentally, there is no index entry for *nafs* by itself.

Very minor shortcomings of this kind should not materially affect the reviewer's overall verdict. *A Sufi Apologist of Nīshāpūr* is an original and valuable study, skilfully researched and written, of a major Sufi author and thinker. It deserves the attention of anyone interested in the development of methodology in *'ilm al-taṣawwuf* and/or that of the classic treatises composed in its defence. Regrettably, its price – like that of some other books on Equinox's estimable list – may deter some prospective purchasers.

Voluntary Assistant, British Library, London **Muhammad Isa Waley**

ADVICE TO MY SON. By Ibn Al-Jawzī (translated by Mokrane Guezzou). Swansea: Claritas Books, 2019. Pp. 96. ISBN: 9781905837052.

The Qur'ān establishes many principles to help humans return to Allah and to improve themselves. It informs them that they are the best of creation and, simultaneously, that they are forgetful, weak and susceptible to the temptations of desire and whispers of Satan. A question, therefore, arises about the mechanisms, if any, that Allah, out of benevolence, proffers on people to assist them to become God-conscious, assertive and resilient against all that drives them away from God's love. One such medium is to exhort each other. *And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers* (*al-Dhāriyāt* 51:55). Thus, it follows that giving reminders is a cornerstone for the betterment of individuals and of society as a whole.

A sense of responsibility, based on the Qur'ānic injunction of protecting children from Hellfire, seems to have induced this grief-stricken father, worried about the Hereafter of his son, to address him directly. The author of this epistle, translated for the first time into the English language, Ibn al-Jawzī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 510–597 AH) probably acted on the above instruction in penning this short treatise for his adult son, Abū'l-Qāsim Badr al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Nāsikh, a scholar and *Ḥadīth* transmitter. The aim was to move him to follow in his steps and take refuge in Allah. In all, there are sixteen reminders from the 'Pride of Iraq'.

Readers will learn that his son possessed sacred knowledge, was studious in his early years and of good character and preached to the masses for some time. However, he faced a difficult phase in his life, whereby he became heedless

in practice, lazy in seeking sacred knowledge, which led him to abandon preaching, keep the company of the corrupt and get drawn to amusement and debauchery. Consequently, his father cut ties with him but, eventually, the son repented from his bad ways, and, later, was the one who prayed over his father upon his death.

As someone who converted over a thousand people, he exhorts his son to accept the existence of God and the Messenger (blessings and peace be upon him) based on proof, from which springs the necessity of abstaining and observing the boundaries set by God. The Imam impresses that everyone has inner resolve, which can falter; nevertheless, they can march forward when prompted (p. 27) and they should petition the Bestower of grace for assistance in removing slackness.

Overall, his approach endorses *taṣawwuf*, which should not come as a surprise, for he was not averse to it *per se*. The author encourages his son to reflect on the lives of pious predecessors such as, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, Rābiʿah al-ʿAdawiyyah and Maʿrūf al-Karkhī (pp. 36–37) and, stresses the importance of reading his own *Ṣifat al-ṣafwah* (The Character of the Elite) and the merits of Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyib, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (p. 57).

The author treaded the way of non-attachment to this world, continuously fasted and stayed awake at night (p. 1). Having experienced the fruits of such *mujāhadah* (exerting effort in the obedience of Allah), he prompted his son to follow suit and seek seclusion, engage in the remembrance of Allah after the morning prayer until sunrise, stand in late night prayer, adopt the routines of the day as established in the Sunnah, offer the mid-morning prayer, seek and be in the company (*ṣuhbah*) of the pious, recite two *juz'* of the Qur'ān in the prayer after *maghrib* and in the late night prayer and other devotional acts.

The Imam praises sacred knowledge profusely, and makes reference to some 'lowly' people who became legendary in Islam, due to this knowledge (p. 50). However, he is critical of knowledge which is not accompanied by practice. As such, he warns, be aware of stopping at the outer form of sacred knowledge without putting it into practice (p. 60).

To awaken desire and fear, the erudite scholar reminds his son of the distinction that human beings have over other creatures, about the reality of angels, enumerating actions and the temporality of life. He tackles the limitations of time and bluntly reminds him, and by extension all readers, that every moment of life is precious. He then turns to hope by presenting the life-stories of those who became headless and spend some of their time in slumber and neglect.

To raise his self-realisation of the Creator and to rekindle the love and fear of Allah, Ibn al-Jawzī advises against being enslaved by the pursuit of sustenance and material well-being but he advocates financial independence. Interestingly, as an impetus, he also draws upon his lineage, tracing it back to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (may Allah be pleased with him), informing him that their ancestors were traders and none of them, apart from himself, was blessed with the resolve to seek sacred knowledge. It was now his turn and he should try hard not to disappoint his high opinion of and hope for him.

Some contemporary Muslims struggle to nurture and reform their youth. Thus, it is useful to highlight the method applied by a father-scholar-preacher, at whose hands over 100,000 returned to Allah. The master orator uses stories, poetry, similes, and exhortation, and provides and identifies appropriate reading material, adopts a lenient and respectful tone, supplicates to Allah, has hope, pleads to his son's good self and reminds him of his lineage. Moreover, he offers opportunities for introspection, questions for reflection and appeals to his intellect.

This small book consists of a foreword which offers the context and historical information about the author and his family and lineage. There is an author's introduction with selected references and 70 notes supplementing the main text.

These brief pieces of advices are timeless and each one is important in its own right. However, the thrust, in the context of the life of his son, is that the acquisition of sacred knowledge must be accompanied by actions and practice, beyond those that are compulsory.

Birmingham, UK **Imran Mogra**

MAWLANA HAMID BANGALI: A SAINT AND A SPIRITUAL LEADER OF BENGAL. By Azhar Uddin Molla. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Islamic Cultural Centre – Dhaka division – on behalf of Islamic Foundation, 1984. Pp 86. IF library Catalogue: 891.443, Sub: Biography.

This book is neither a new publication nor is it published in English. Yet, the reason it is chosen for review is its subject matter. This slim booklet of just 86 pages published in Bengali more than three decades ago presents a rare and rewarding glimpse into one of the shining chapters of Islamic history in the Indian sub-continent. It narrates the life of a leading Islamic saint of India: Mawlānā Ḥamīd Bangālī. The reason that makes the historical biographical

story of this sixteenth century luminary worthy of study and attention is his participation alongside the most important reformer of Islam of the second Islamic millennium the *Mujaddid Alf Thānī* (renovator of the second millennium) Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (971 AH/1564 CE-1034 AH/ 1624 CE).

Owning and taking pride in the nation's rich Islamic heritage is not in vogue in today's Bangladesh, in spite of mass ritual observance of the faith, especially in the rural parts of the country. Decades of hostile anti-Islamic propaganda by the ultra-secular establishment almost convinced the country's youth that Islam is somewhat foreign in its otherwise inward-nationalistic narrative. Under the overwhelming influence of its giant neighbour, the country's history is undergoing a thorough re-write, carefully blotting out all references to the outstanding role played by its Muslim sons in shaping the country's history.

This book tells the story of Mawlānā Ḥamīd Bangālī who, nearly five hundred years ago, took part in the glorious struggle of reform and renovation of Islam in the sub-continent. In his moving introduction, the publisher of the book elucidates this point, 'although this small book is insufficient to uncover the full account of the life of this giant of a man from the obscurity of history, we thought this could be the beginning. Because, Sheikh Hamid Bangali was one of those stalwarts whose undaunted contribution paved the way for Islam in Bangladesh and in the sub-continent to strike its roots, develop and flourish.'

Of course Mawlānā Ḥamīd's story cannot be told without first elucidating the story of his master and mentor Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī Fārūqī (R) who is described by Mawlānā Abū'l- Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī as, 'a luminary whose revivalist endeavour has already gained a recognition which is not shared by any reformer in the long history of Islamic revivalism,' for 'this Renovator of the Second Millennium has exerted an influence transcending the century in which he was born.'

In order to fully appreciate the extent and brilliance of Shaykh Aḥmed Sirhindī's reforms, one needs to examine the widespread anti-Islamic innovations that crept into the religious practices of that period, coupled with state-sponsored measures aimed at almost eliminating Islam from India. In that period, Islam in India had largely lost its earlier intellectual flourish, although the masses remained deeply religious and clung to various practices which were not necessarily approved by Islam such as excessive reverence to the tombs and shrines of saints and other forms of religiosity which became commonplace. Sufi guides belonging to different 'Sufi' orders were busy establishing their own 'khanaqahs' and centres while the Muslim masses, with their scant religious education, were unable to distinguish aberration and innovation from the true faith and, with every passing day, the Muslim minority was becoming

increasingly socially impregnated with the superstitious beliefs and un-Islamic customs of the Hindu majority.

At such a critical juncture in the history of Islam in India, the ascension of Akbar to the Mughal throne added insult to injury. Akbar was crowned as emperor in his early teens as an orthodox Muslim but not for long. Like any illiterate teenager, his religious thoughts and practices kept swinging from one position to another. The Muslims found it puzzling and shocking how he evolved from a strict Muslim to a radical innovator, a proto-Christian, a Crypto-Hindu, an atheist and an apostate. His marriage to the Hindu Rajput princess, his dialogue (mostly one sided) with Christian, Jewish, Zarathustrian as well as Zain priests and his overdependence on irreligious and atheist advisors, such as Abū'l-Fayzī and sycophantic ulema, such as Mullā Mubārak who drafted the infamous fatwa (Rajab 987 A.H) later transformed into an imperial decree declaring Akbar as *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, infallible as well as ultimate arbiter on all matters Islamic, contributed to Akbar's degeneration into religious and cultural perversion and apostasy. The accounts on Akbar's metamorphosis are numerous, according to the accounts recorded in his book *Muntakhabāt Tawārīkh*, his own courtier and contemporary historian Mullā ʿAbd al-Qādir Bada'ūnī, Akbar abolished the *Zakāt*, made disparaging remarks about the noble Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him), including mocking the Prophet's Night Ascension (*Miʿrāj*), disapproved Islamic learning, expressly showed antipathy towards and dislike to the Prophet's names (such as Aḥmad, Muḥammad and Muṣṭafā), asking some courtiers with such names to change them, abolished the *Adhān* in the state hall, forbade the canonical prayers of Islam, the fast of Ramadan, and even the pilgrimage. He also introduced the worship of sun, changed the Islamic salutation of *al-salām ʿalaikum* and its reply *Wa ʿalaykum al-salām* to *Allāhu Akbar* and *Jalla Jalāluhu* respectively – a slogan which could also mean Akbar is God and matching part of his given name 'Jalal'; he insisted on minting this slogan on his coins in celebration of the end of a thousand years in the Islamic calendar. Akbar introduced a strange new religion called *Dīn-i Ilāhī*, and styled himself 'shadow of God' on earth and ordered visitors to prostrate before him (a practice which was finally abolished by his great- grandson Aurangzeb). Historians, past and present, including those who tried to give a spirited defence of Akbar's religious policies, could not deny most of these excesses of Akbar. According to Vincent Smith, 'the whole gist of regulations was to further the adoption of Hindu, Jain and Parsi practices, while discouraging or positively prohibiting essential Muslim rites.' Ishawri Prashad says, 'The emperor's disregard for the religion of the Prophet, which was manifest in the rules and regulations issued by him further

exasperated the learned in the law (Ulama) and produced a great uneasiness in the minds of the Muslims.'

To make matters worse, a strong millennial current was gripping society as the end of first 1000 years of Islamic history were approaching in 1591 CE, the year when Akbar's reign entered its thirty fifth year. Akbar was mulling over the idea of proclaiming himself a millennial sovereign. According to Bada'ūnī, 'the emperor believed Islam will last only 1000 years – until 1000 AH – at which point he would be free to abnegate Islam altogether.' Akbar's chronicler Abū'l-Faḍl claimed that Akbar had been born 'to inaugurate the second Islamic millennium'.

In spite of these darker misadventures of Akbar, Islam's inherent vibrancy soon discredited and renounced such ignorant attempts. The true Islamic spirit resumed, and a new and distinctive Muslim society was rebuilt. In this critical juncture, this magnificent service to Islam was rendered by the magnificent movement launched by Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī Fārūqī. Akbar was partially right that, at the onset of each millennium, a rejuvenation and rebirth of Islam happened. But its architect could not have been Akbar, and instead it was Shaykh Aḥmad. In the words of Mawlānā Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī, 'Such was, in fact, his success that the posterity conferred upon him the title of Mujaddid (alf-thānī) or Renovator (of the second millennium) with which even the modern educated persons are more acquainted than his personal name'.

The book, *Mawlānā Ḥamīd Bangālī*, provides a pulsating account of the life of the *Mujaddid* and the unbending fortitude with which he fought and triumphed over the tribulations that he faced. The *Mujaddid*'s campaign to eradicate the malevolent trends Akbar introduced in matters of faith made an impact on the general masses as well as on the members of the Imperial armed forces and even on some dignitaries of the Royal Court. He also established a widespread network of *Khalīfah*s (deputies) in all parts of India and surrounding countries. Emperor Jahangir became alarmed with such success and feared that the *Mujaddid* was probably going to instigate a rebellion. In his memoirs, *Tuzuk-i- Jahāngīrī*, he writes that the *Mujaddid* had 'sent into every city and country one of his disciples, whom he calls 'deputy" and that he imprisoned the *Mujaddid* to ensure that, 'the excitement of the people should also subside.'

Emperor Jahangir summoned Shaykh Aḥmad to appear before him. In spite of repeated pleadings of the court Mufti and the Crown Prince Khurra (Shāhjahān), the *Mujaddid* refused to make the complementary prostration before the emperor (introduced by Akbar). When asked by the emperor to explain the reasons of his refusal, the *Mujaddid* replied that he did not recognise any etiquette except what is prescribed by Allah and His Prophet. Clearly

annoyed, Jahangir ordered him to prostrate anyway, but the *Mujaddid* refused saying that he would not prostrate to anyone except Allah. An infuriated emperor ordered the imprisonment of the *Mujaddid* in the Gwalior Fort. The government also confiscated the *Mujaddid*'s house, his cloister as well as his water well, his fruit groves and books. His family members were forcefully transfered to another location. However, imprisonment came as a blessing for the *Mujaddid* used it profitably by gaining further spiritual attainments and opportunity to preach to his fellow inmates, thus converting a large number of non-Muslim prisoners to Islam and reforming and re-educating the Muslim prisoners. Outside prison walls his popularity soared considerably, forcing the emperor to release him with full respect and soon afterwards sent the Crown Prince and the prime minister to invite him to stay at the Royal Camp for some time.

Mawlānā Ḥamīd Bangālī was appointed by the Mujaddid as his Khalīfah (deputy) in Bengal. As two of his disciples had the same name Ḥamīd (the other from Punjab and was named Ḥamīd Lahori); in order to differentiate them the *Mujaddid* decided to add the name of their province to their name, which they continued to wear with pride. Mawlānā Ḥamīd was born in 1598 CE in the famous Kazi family of Uzani Mangalcot of the Bardhaman district in West Bengal, a place long inhabited by a succession of distinguished Islamic personalities and visited by a long chain of prominent individuals over the centuries, including at one stage Shāhjadah Khurram in 1622 CE when he rebelled against his father Jahangir to ensure his right of succession and briefly concurred Bengal (in 1624 CE) and paid a visit to Shaykh Ḥamīd seeking his prayer for success in winning the throne. The following morning, after a night long vigil, the saint informed the Prince that the throne will definitely be his. Within four years of this prediction, Prince Khurram ascended the Peacock Throne.

It is said that Shaykh Ḥamīd received his higher education in Delhi university which he completed with distinction before further in-depth specialist study in Lahore. Prince Khurram was also a junior student in Delhi university during the Shaykh's time in the university. His brilliant academic achievement soon became common knowledge among the intelligentsia. This led to his friendship with one of the leading scholars of the period Mufti ʿAbd al-Raḥmān of Agra. Shaykh Hamid used to visit the Mufti for higher theological discourses and, during one such visits, he met Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī in the Mufti's house. Like a seasoned handler of precious stones, the *Mujaddid* immediately recognised how invaluable Shaykh Ḥamīd would be in his movement and invited him to join him. After spending a further year

with the *Mujaddid* in Sarhind, Ḥamīd received the *Mujaddid*'s permission to return to Bengal as his *Khalīfah*. In his letter of appointment, a translation of which is included in this book, the *Mujaddid* confirms the extraordinary academic and spiritual excellence attained by Mawlānā Ḥamīd and, on that basis, he was appointed a *Khalīfah* (deputy). It is also said that Shaykh Ḥamīd was conferred the position of the first among the *Khalīfah*s of the *Mujaddid Alf-Thānī*. In Mangalkot he took the charge of the ancient Madrasah as its principal and raised its standard to such a level that students from both Bengal and other parts of India soon started to flock to receive education under this learned master. Apart from teaching, he also played a key role in the reform movement of the *Mujaddid* and contributed to cleansing Muslims of Bengal from un-Islamic innovations, superstitions and errant ways. Mawlānā Ḥamīd left this material world in 1050 AH.

The book also records emperor Shāhjahān's continued respect and love for the Mawlānā, as after ascending the throne in 1055 AH, he ordered Katlu Khān, the Subeder (governor) of Bengal, to look after the family of the Mawlānā. On inquiry the governor found out that the Mawlānā was no longer alive and that his Madrasah was also in a state of poor maintenance. Receiving this message, the emperor ordered to build a mosque next to the Mawlānā's grave. Thus the famous Baroduari Masjid (Mosque of Twelve Doors) was built. Today some parts of the mosque along with a few columns remain standing. The foundation stone's Arabic inscription mentions the 'generous Khāgān Ṣāḥib Quirau thānī Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāhjahān Badshāh' and is dated 1065 AH.

London, UK **Chowdhury Mueen Uddin**

Ibn Ṭumlūs (d. 620/1223), Compendium on Logic (al-Mukhtaṣar fī al-manṭiq), edited by Fouad Ben Ahmed. Leiden: Brill, 2020. Pp. 546 (English study 31 pp, Arabic critical edition 525 pp)**.** ISBN: 9789004400801

Ben Ahmed's excellent critical edition and study of Ibn Ṭumlūs 'short' compendium of logic (at an impressive 500–odd pages one wonders what a 'larger' work would look like!) is long awaited. The work, aside from its intrinsic value as a testament to logic from Islam's western frontiers, does much to correct the long-held assumption that philosophy died with Ibn Rushd who was intellectually survived by only one or two major students. Such a conclusion is no longer tenable, 'not merely "grossly exaggerated" but simply false' (p. 1). Ben Ahmed does much to provide essential information on the scholar's life,

mentioning his erudition in philosophy, grammar and poetry, and especially the Greek intellectual heritage. He confirms that Ibn Rushd was his primary influence in terms of direct teachers. The work demonstrates that its author read Ghazālī's works on logic, as well as those of Fārābī and Aristotle. In the *Books of Rhetoric and Poetics* (which make up the latter part of the present *Mukhtaṣar*), Ibn Ṭumlūs demonstrates his expertise in Arabic literature and poetry. He clearly had access to a rich and well-populated library in addition to his intrinsic genius and deep reflection on the subject.

The text covers all parts of the traditional *Organon* from al-Fārābī's time onward. It offers a valuable insight into logic as it was practised in 13th century Andalusia. Ben Ahmed notes that the primary purpose of this book is didactic and not an exhaustive treatment. Regarding the theory of demonstration, Ibn Ṭumlūs appears to have used Ibn Rushd's commentaries as the means of understanding and elucidating Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* more than Fārābī's *Book of Syllogism*. There is however textual evidence indicating that he is quoting from the Arabic *Prior Analytics* directly. We must, however, be careful not to underplay Fārābī's influence. Ibn Ṭumlūs' discussion of juridical inferences (*al-maqāyīs al-fiqhiyyah*) shows that unlike Ibn Rushd who questioned the possibility of considering this as a type of syllogism, he, following Fārābī, chooses to treat it at length. Ibn Ṭumlūs agreed that juridical inferences have the same power as other syllogisms yet, unlike Fārābī, he explicitly avoided suggesting links between reasoning used by the Islamic jurists and that used by rhetoricians. Ibn Ṭumlūs' *Book of Syllogism* criticizes Ibn Sīnā's assertion that a proposition which is negative, universal, and absolute cannot be converted and held that it indeed can be converted as a universal negative proposition. He argued: if no joy is a good, then no good is a joy. Likewise, affirmative universal propositions can be converted as affirmative particular positions: if all joys are a good, then some 'goods' are joys.

Contrary to Aristotle and Ibn Rushd, Ibn Ṭumlūs jettisoned the concept of topics in the *Book of Dialectic*, though his definition of it is identical to Ibn Rushd's: the topic is a syllogism in potentiality, i.e. potentially all the syllogisms that fall under it. Like Fārābī and Ibn Rushd, Ibn Ṭumlūs defended the use and utility of dialectic, its universal value, and its scientific underpinning. Ibn Ṭumlūs, notes Ben Ahmed, 'assigned to dialectic the responsibility of defending religious beliefs and destroying the opinions of opponents, a responsibility that was usually attributed to Islamic theology and which Ibn Rushd would certainly not have tolerated... [He] went beyond Ibn Rushd in enlarging the scope of dialectic to embrace theological method and issues, a move that reveals their positions towards theology and theologians' (Ibid).

It is important to appreciate that by including a *Book of Rhetoric* and a *Book of Poetics* Ibn Ṭumlūs followed 'the expanded *Organon*' whose principles are also manifest in his position regarding the idea of syllogism. In this regard he was a peripatetic who held that there was no difference between arguments in terms of form. This means that they can all be reduced to syllogism. 'In other words, for Ṭumlūs, all demonstrative, dialectical, and sophistical arguments, as well as the rhetorical and poetic ones, take one syllogistic form. The difference between those arguments resides in the content and nature of their premises. The result therefore was five syllogistic arts, so that in the same way that one can talk about a demonstrative syllogism, one can also talk about a poetic syllogism' (p. 21).

Regarding poetic syllogism, we note that Ibn Ṭumlūs departed from Ibn Rushd's views whilst drawing on his work. Ibn Ṭumlūs accepted wholeheartedly the validity of poetic syllogisms and discussed how they conform to the famed 'second figure' of logical syllogisms, seeking thereby to explain their mode of operation. His work is clearly a profound adaptation of Aristotle's *Poetica*. He seems to have provided the foundation for literary theorizing by later scholars of the Islamic West and Andalusia. The publication of this important work is therefore a tremendous achievement in filling in important gaps in the story of Ibn Rushd's legacy and an opportunity, at last, to study the work of one of Andalusia's greatest and most unique philosophical minds.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates **Karim Gabor Kocsenda**

THE ISMAILI IMAMS: A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY. By Farhad Daftary. London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2020. Pp. 260. ISBN: 9780755617982.

In his latest publication, Farhad Daftary, the head of the Department of Academic Research and Publications at The Institute of Ismaili Studies and the doyen of Ismāʿīlī Shīʿī studies, turns his attention to historically documenting the lives of forty-nine of the Imams revered by different sub-sects of Ismāʿīlī Shīʿīs – the Imams being seen by Ismāʿīlīs as the rightful spiritual and communal leaders of the Ismāʿīlī community. These sub-sects and groups include the early Ismāʿīlīs, the medieval Nizārīs of Alamut, the Fatimid Caliphate, and the modern day followers of the fourth Agha Khan. Drawing upon the latest primary sources and scholarly secondary studies, the book provides readers with short biographies of the Ismāʿīlī Imams, which

have benefited from the continued development and advancement of Ismāʿīlī Shīʿī studies in recent decades, much of it spearheaded by The Institute of Ismaili Studies and scholars affiliated with it. Daftary draws also on his own extensive research and publications over many decades on Ismāʿīlī and general Shīʿī studies that include books on the "Assassins" and myth-making about them and the two classic scholarly book-length histories of the Ismāʿīlīs, *The Ismailis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998). Daftary's newest book, *The Ismaili Imams*, is the first scholarly study that considers all of the major Ismāʿīlī Imams collectively in a single volume.

Shīʿī studies has long been overshadowed by scholarly interest in Sunnism and Sunnī history, theology, and traditions because the latter makes up the vast majority of the world's Muslims. However, in recent decades Shīʿī studies has greatly expanded thanks to a number of new scholars. Within the broader field of Shīʿī studies, Ismāʿīlī studies has often fallen behind Twelver (or Imāmī) Shīʿī studies, though, since its founding in 1977, The Institute of Ismaili Studies has spearheaded research on early Shīʿism and Ismāʿīlī history and theology in particular.

The Ismaili Imams draws upon this rich and growing body of academic literature and research on Ismāʿīlī history, societies, and theologies to create detailed but also brief biographical sketches, divided into forty-nine chapters, organized in nine parts and based on different historical periods. The first group of Imams include the earliest ones recognized by Ismāʿīlīs including the first six Shīʿī Imams up to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and then continuing through his son, Ismāʿīl, and his grandson, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl. Ismāʿīl, whose recognition as the Imam of the early Ismāʿīlīs was contested by the Twelvers of his time, according to Twelver primary sources of the time, may have been in contact with some of the early radical Shīʿī groups, including *ghulāt* groups, whose members were dissatisfied with the political quietism of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. Daftary includes insights from these and other primary sources while also noting the historical contexts in which they were produced and by whom, which informs readers as to their overall reliability and potential biases contained within them.

Early Ismāʿīlī history is hampered by the lack of reliable primary sources, Daftary points out, and he has instead had to draw upon an array of available primary documents carefully to evaluate and identify potentially useful historical information about the Ismāʿīlīs of this period before the rise to prominence of the Fatimid Caliphate in 909. This dearth of primary sources

is in large part, Daftary argues, because the Ismāʿīlī Imams of the formative period were in hiding due to persecution by the ʿAbbasid Caliphate and used pseudonyms and *taqiyyah* (precautionary dissimulation) to protect themselves and their followers. The advent of the line of Fatimid Imam-Caliphs and the Nizārī state of Alamut marked the high water mark of medieval or middle period Ismāʿīlism, periods and groups of Imams well documented in Daftary's new book. The destruction by the Ilkhanid Mongols under Hulegu Khan of the Alamut state in 1257, before they went on to sack the ʿAbbasid capital of Baghdad, ushered in a second shadowy period of Ismāʿīlī history, a period which is, Daftary notes, marked by a dearth of reliable primary documents due to the collapse of the centralized Ismāʿīlī *daʿwah* apparatus and the reintroduction of *taqiyyah*, making the historian's job all the more difficult.

The book is beautifully illustrated with photographs and images of miniatures and other paintings showing places of importance in Ismāʿīlī history, historical objects, maps, and portraits of key Ismāʿīlī Imams. One criticism of the book is that the individual chapters are not footnoted, making it difficult to follow up on interesting tidbits of information that Daftary has included throughout. The book does include a select bibliography listing key secondary studies and a useful glossary of key terms. *The Ismaili Imams* will be of interest and of use to students and scholars of Islamic studies, Ismāʿīlī and broader Shīʿī studies, medieval history, and art and architectural history as well as interested non-specialist readers.

George Mason University, US **Christopher Anzalone**

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It should be noted that acknowledgement of receipt of these books is no guarantee of review. However, efforts will be made to review them in subsequent issues.

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