

Islamophobic acts compel Muslims to defend, rather than criticise, some of the most un-Islamic ideas and actions. These two consequences demand more space than is provided in the volume. Inclusion of chapters on Muslim extremism, which has been alluded to by John Esposito in his “Introduction”, and the debate on religious freedom among Muslims, would have improved the quality of the volume. The second edition of the volume will hopefully be free from editorial lapses. Moreover, the referencing system should be used uniformly throughout the book. Authors should not repeat their sentences verbatim. Furthermore, typographical errors ought to be eliminated to facilitate smooth reading. These lapses notwithstanding, the volume under review is of great value to those who cherish democratic principles and values. It deserves attention from scholars and laymen alike in both the West and in the Muslim world.

God and logic in Islam: The caliphate of reason. By John Walbridge. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 211. ISBN: 978-0-521-19534-8 (Hardcover).

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The book delves extensively into rationalism, and particularly scholastic rationalism in the Islamic intellectual synthesis. The author focuses mainly on the proposition that Islamic intellectual life has been characterized by reason and that the core intellectual tradition of Islam is primarily rational in spite of being deeply based on revelation. Many non-Muslims, especially in the Western world, and even a number of modern Muslims tend to see Islam as inherently anti-rational in nature. The main contention of the author is that the logic inherent within central ideas of Islamic life drove relentlessly toward a situation where Islamic religious knowledge was placed in a rational context; with reason providing the guiding principles for bodies of knowledge whose origin was non-rational. The book contains useful information of significance to the Muslims.

The book is divided into three parts and consists of an introduction and ten chapters with a total of 211 pages. It also contains a lengthy selected bibliography (pp. 187-202) which serves as source reference for further readings. There are also brief definitions and identifications in the index (pp. 203-211). Part one of the book covers chapters one to five, which effectively focuses on reason and rationality in Islam. The analysis made in these chapters adopts a historical perspective and explains the formation of Islamic tradition of reason. In his book, the author defines reason or rationality as “the systematic and controlling use of beliefs, arguments or actions based on well-grounded premises and valid arguments such that another person who has access to the same information can understand the argument correctly and agree that the premises are well-grounded and the logic is sound, and that the resultant beliefs, arguments or actions are correct” (p. 16). Logic is derived from the Greek word *logos*, which literally denotes “to speak”. In its philosophical context, *logos* tends to be used in three senses: first, for the inner nature of something, second, for the theory explaining it and third, for the verbal exposition of its theory (p. 19).

Walbridge examines the underlying epistemological premises on which the methods of Islamic scholarship are fundamentally based and how this relates to other manifestations of intellectual life in the Islamic tradition. He discusses the relationship between philosophy and religion during the pre-Islamic period. The author also analyses Islam’s encounter with Greek philosophy and explains the emergence of Muslim philosophers. The author further clarifies the issue of mysticism in Islamic tradition and exhibits how it became a philosophical tool central to the metaphysics and epistemology of later Islamic philosophers. In this regard, the works of Ibn Arabi and Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi are of great significance. In what the author dubs as the “failure” of Islamic science, he tried to explain the reasons behind the lack of the scientific revolution in the Islamic world, and the very reasons behind its occurrence in the West. The author’s explanations in this regard are open to debate.

Part two of the book comprises of three chapters. Chapters 6 and 7 deal primarily with the question of scholasticism and Islamic religious sciences, examining in particular the way and manner in which logic was systematically incorporated into aspects such as *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *‘ilm al-kalām*. Chapter 8 addresses what the author terms

institutionalized disagreement among Muslims. He postulates that even though Islam advocates unity, Muslim scholars came to tolerate a systematic disagreement on certain issues. Since Muslim scholars agreed to disagree, it easily paved the way for the emergence of different schools of thought (*madhāhib*) among the Muslims.

Part three consists of chapters 9 and 10. In chapter 9, the gradual decline and ultimate downfall of Islamic scholasticism, especially during the last two centuries, has been discussed. There was a glaring gradual intellectual decadence leading to a decline and to some extent even a rejection by some modern Muslim thinkers of the old Islamic tradition in favour of a new brand of literalism and Western secularism. This necessitates probing that which had gone wrong with Islamic scholasticism in the present times.

In chapter 10, the author concludes his book by examining some of the intellectual discontents of contemporary Islam. A brief synopsis on the current intellectual condition of the Muslim world is presented in this chapter, following which the author indicates how earlier Islamic notions of reason might guide Muslim thinkers in the contemporary period. The author finally concedes that Muslims who now live in America are most likely to play a key role in the 21st century.

The book is a by-product of ideas developed by the author over the course of his long academic career which began during his undergraduate days of Islamic studies and later through his research on the role of logic in Islamic education and also the relation of Islamic science and medicine with philosophy. The target audience of the book includes Muslims, non-Muslims and general readers.

The author tries to use his knowledge of Islam in a way that may be unacceptable to Muslims. In this book, the author has made certain remarks which need to be re-examined from an Islamic perspective. For example, he observes that “Islam is another path from Christianity” (p. 6). In this path, “most non-Muslims however sympathetic they might be to Islam would see the Quran and Sunnah, the practice of the prophet, as being in some sense the product of the social and religious context of seventh-century Arabia” (p. 11).

The attitude of casting doubt around the divinity of the Qur’ān and putting forward the argument that it was composed by Prophet

Muhammad (s.a.w.) is common in the writings of many Orientalists. It must further be pointed out that remarks in the book which cast doubt upon the independent reasoning of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* (p. 11) are not acceptable to Muslims.

This volume is of high academic standard. It is well written and the issues discussed are well presented. It may be recommended for critical study and analysis by students of Islamic Studies at the higher level. The major shortcoming of the book, however, is that it contains some ideas that are antithetical to the true teachings of Islam, therefore necessitating a critical re-examination from an Islamic perspective. Unless this is done, readers might end up coming to a wrong perception of Islam. The author has managed to achieve his purpose to a certain extent by depicting what may be seen as the weaknesses of Muslims.

Intellectuals and civil society in the Middle East: Liberalism, modernity and political discourse. Edited By Mohammed Bamyeh. London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2012, pp. viii+214. ISBN: 978-1-84885-628-8.

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Intellectuals and Civil Society in the Middle East is based on papers presented at a workshop at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy in March, 2008. The volume, edited by Mohammed Bamyeh, is wide-ranging and provides a comprehensive analysis of the social role of intellectuals in the Middle East. The analysis made in the chapters of the book presents a deep, insightful, and perceptive examination of the role of intellectuals in politics, culture, and society in the Middle East.

Consisting of three parts and divided into nine chapters, the book considers and takes into account intellectuals belonging to the Middle East and their respective work and activities. Part one of the volume under review is devoted to a discussion of contributions made by activist-scholars and early modernists such as Nazik al-Abid, Murad