

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.

Reviewer: Tauseef Ahmad Parray, PhD Candidate, Department of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India. E-Mail: tauseef.parray21@gmail.com.

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

Farag and Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi. Part two chronicles activists and lesser-known influential Islamist figures such as al-Nabulusi, Kisakürek and Topçu. Part three of the book includes academicians and prominent Arab figures in the West like Edward Said, Mohammed Arkoun, Hisham Sharabi and Halim Barakat.

The chapters deal with many prominent and significant themes, as found in the balance between modernity and tradition; the East-West encounter; the feminist nationalist struggle and social reformism; alongside gender issues and Turkish Islamism; and religious and transnational identifications. The chapters provide answers to various questions such as: How do intellectuals influence public life and public debates? What sort of relationship exists between intellectuals, “street politics”, and civil society? What are the institutional venues of public and organic intellectual life, and how effective, stable, or flexible they are? How are intellectuals connected to social movements? (p. 1). Although these questions were posed in 2008, their answers have become rather more pressing in the wake of the Arab Spring and requires all intellectuals, especially those in the Middle East “to think more seriously about their role in society” (p. 2).

In the introduction (chapter one), Mohammed Bamyeh lays down what he calls “the social dynamism of the organic intellectual” (p. 1). In order to assess dynamism of intellectuals in a society he suggests the following four themes: intellectuals and modern alienation; organic intellectual; organicism and novelty; and locations of the intellectual. The chapters in this book are thus woven around these four themes. For example, in chapter two, the role of *Nur al-Fayha*, which was established in January 1919 in Damascus by Nazik al-Abid as a “pivot of the activity of women’s activities” (p. 50), is discussed. Chapter three focuses on Murad Farag, the Egyptian jurist, scholar, journalist and poet, and his weekly journal *al-Tahdhib* (Edification). This chapter offers a “record of modern Arab intellectual life as viewed from the margins” (pp. 57-58, 62, 71).

Chapter four examines the legacy of the political and social thinker and activist, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854-1902). He is well-known for the following two books: *Umm al-Qurā* and *Tabā’i’ al-Istibdād*. In *Tabā’i’ al-Istibdād*, he sought to provide his own answers to a major question: What has gone wrong with the Muslims? For him, the

following three elements were at fault, namely, traditional (pre-modern) Islam; foreign Islam (non-Arab effects on Islam); and false Islam (Sufism), or dead Islam (traditional *'ulamā'*); all being “causes of what went wrong”, because all are resistant to modernization (pp. 85-86). Thus, his writings became a staple food for the “Egyptian-influenced Arab awakening and the dissemination of an anti-Ottoman Islamism in the Muslim world” (p. 86).

Chapter five discusses the Damascene *'ālim* Abd al-Nabulusi who was active intellectually, socially and politically. This chapter deals with the difficult question of whether a pre-modern *'ālim* may be considered a public intellectual. By examining the life and times of Abd al-Nabulusi the analysis made in this chapter concludes that “scholars have so far ignored the multi-faceted nature of *ulama*” (p. 107). Chapter six considers the contributions of Necip Fazil and Nurettin Topcu as the “founders of Turkish Islamism in the wake of Kemalist revolution” (p. 111). Although both are “little known outside Turkey,” they “reformulated the methodology and content of Islamism” in Turkey (p. 111). This chapter analyses the main features of their political views and draws out the “common aspects of their intellectual works” (p. 111).

Chapter seven of the book provides a comparison of the discourse of a group of Islamist women with two varieties of popular Islamist discourse on women and feminism. This chapter moreover points out the strengths and limitations of Islamist women’s discourse on “femininity, housewifery, patriarchy, justice, and equality” (p. 135). Chapter eight examines the roles and contributions of Mohammed Arkoun and Edward Said. Both achieved international recognition as leading intellectuals for the reason that they utilized “Western theoretical apparatus to make sense of the contemporary Arab situation, while furthermore making the Arab voice audible in Europe and the USA” (p. 159). The analysis made in chapter eight reveals how their “intellectual roles were shaped through structural and objective processes” (p. 160). The main thesis put forth is that sociological factors such as “field structures” must be taken into consideration, as biographical dimensions greatly matter in intellectual concerns, and that is why both Arkoun and Said became “prominent Arab intellectual figures through the social patterns of Western academic fields” (p. 175).

Chapter nine analyses the intellectual careers of Hisham Sharabi and Halim Barakat who voluntarily live in exile in the West. They are “preoccupied with bridging the gap between the East and the West” (p. 182). Sharing a common vision, both Sharabi and Barakat maintain that the people of the East and West should “transcend binary thought and reductionist cultural categorization as a means towards achieving better human understanding, tolerance, and healthy transformation” (p. 194). For them, developing a “historical understanding of relations between the East and the West would serve as a window from which “to look ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, and to arrive at a better understanding of the Self and Other” (p. 184).

The editor of the book is in need of a conclusion to match his comprehensive and informative introduction. This significant omission deprives the editor of the opportunity to neatly tie up loose ends and reinforce the main points made in the chapters. It also denied the book a fitting and decent climax. This shortcoming aside, the editor of the volume deserves special appreciation for bringing out this commendable work to a wider audience. In sum, making a meticulous analysis and examination of the social role of intellectuals of a rather diverse range in the Middle East, *Intellectuals and Civil Society in the Middle East* is an impressive and essential new contribution to the literature on Middle Eastern societies and politics.

The Arab awakening: Islam and the new Middle East. By Tariq Ramadan. London: Penguin Books, 2012, pp. viii+273. ISBN 978-1-846-14650-3.

Reviewer: Nadhera Mohammad Qassem, PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, International Islamic University Malaysia. E-mail: nadhera17@gmail.com.

Tariq Ramadan’s *The Arab Awakening: Islam and the New Middle East* is an important contribution to the understanding of the Arab Uprisings, sometimes referred to as the Arab Spring, that rocked the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which began in Tunisia in