

**Reclaiming the conversation: Islamic intellectual tradition in the Malay Archipelago.** Edited by Rosnani Hashim. Selangor, Malaysia: The Other Press, 2010, pp. 288. ISBN 978-983-9541-74-8 (Paperback).

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Islamic education was introduced in the Malay Archipelago with the spread of Islam in the eleventh century C.E. This later developed into a system of Islamic education in the forms of *pondok* and *madrasah*. The book under review, *Reclaiming the Conversation: Islamic Intellectual Tradition in the Malay Archipelago*, examines the efforts of prominent Muslim intellectuals in developing Islamic education, curriculum and institutions particularly in the Malay world. The works and educational reforms of eleven scholars spanning through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (CE) from three countries in the Malay world were explored. In particular, the book focuses on Shaykh Daud al-Fatani of Pattani in South Thailand, Munshi Abdullah Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad (Tok Kenali), Shaykh Ahmad al-Hady and Za'ba of Malaya (Peninsular Malaysia), and Shaykh Abd al-Samad al-Palembani, Imam Zarkasyi, Mahmud Yunus, Hamka, Hasyim Asy'ari and Harun Nasution of Indonesia.

Chapters have been arranged in the historical context of the lives of the reviewed Muslim intellectuals to underscore the rationale for their concerns, inclinations and nature of writings. The colonization of Malaya and Indonesia, and the subjugation of southern Thailand have led the eleven scholars to be conscious of the need to resolve the maladies and challenges of those territories through knowledge and education. The scholars discussed in the book can be divided into two groups, the traditionalists and the modernists. The traditionalists were known as the Old Guards (*Kaum Tua*), namely Shaykh Daud al-Fatani, Shaykh Abd al-Samad al-Palembani, and Munshi Abdullah. They were conservative and were concerned with the development of an Islamic education system based on a traditional curriculum. The remaining scholars are modernists or the Young Turks (*Kaum Muda*) (p. xv) who were concerned with integrating Western and Islamic education

to produce balanced and skilled Muslim professionals. Influenced by the *islāh* movement of Abduh and Afghani, the modern scholars aimed to change their society through different means including education, publication, and involvement in social organizations.

Rosnani Hashim, editor of the book under review, introduces the book with a brief historical background of the three countries, tracing the development of Islam during the period of colonization, the struggle between the traditionalists and modernists, and the transformation from the traditional to the modern system of Islamic education. In the second chapter, Ibrahim Narongraksakhet explores Shaykh Daud al-Fatani's writings and translation works, which are used as textbooks and references in the *pondok* system. He was also responsible for the method of learning that has been widely used in *pondoks* known as *menadah kitab*. The late Muhammad Uthman el-Muhammady examines Shaykh Abd Samad's sufistic idea of the journey of the soul, spiritual education, and psychology in the third chapter. Sheikh el-Muhammady wittingly asserts that Shaykh Daud's ideas and method of integration and spiritual realization could be useful in resolving the current social problems since the root of the problems actually lie in the malady of the individuals' personality. In the next chapter, Rosnani presents Munshi Abdullah as a historian, social critic and an ethnographer who strove to elucidate the minds of his people through his writings. Munshi emphasised on the importance of learning language and aspired to develop a system of grammar for the Malay language. It is interesting to note that a traditionalist like Munshi stressed on the relationship between language and knowledge, echoing similar thesis espoused by modern Western philosophers such as Vygotsky, Wittgenstein, and Chomsky.

The fourth chapter written by Wan Mazwati focuses on Muhammad Yusuf bin Ahmad famously known as Tok Kenali (1868-1933 CE). Tok Kenali is an example of an early modernist in reforming the curriculum and pedagogy of the *pondok* system. He established an integrated education system that included examinations so as to provide the public with more choices of Islamic education. In the fifth chapter, Ibrahim Abu Bakar and Rosnani discuss the contributions of Sayid Shaykh al-Hadi, one of the pioneers and leaders of *Kaum Muda* who founded the *madrasah* system of education in Malaya including a highly regarded institution today, *Madrasah al-Mashoor al-Islamiyyah*. Al-Hadi also wrote on women's rights. Following this, Rosnani discusses

the contributions of Zainal Abidin Ahmad (*Pendeta Za'ba*) who, like Munshi, was very much concerned with the plight of the Malays and had written extensively on the importance of improving the Malay society.

Chapter seven and onwards discuss the five modernist scholars from Indonesia commencing with Hasyim Asy'ari, followed by Mahmud Yunus, Hamka, Imam Zarkasyi and Harun Nasution. Masyharuddin introduces Hasyim Asy'ari (1871-1947) as a modern scholar, a social activist, and one of the founders of *Nadhlatul Ulama* (NU). Initially, Hasyim established a *pondok pesantren*, but later reformed it into the *madrasah* system (which offered subjects on general knowledge and gradually introduced the Indonesian language, Mathematics and Geography). His *madrasah* system had a structure consisting of three levels, the foundational (for the learning of Arabic language), lower and higher levels. In the eighth chapter, Yety explains how Mahmud Yunus adopted modern methods in implementing and developing the *Deen* by "establishing a teaching educational institution, *al-Jami'ah Islamiah*, developing the curriculum of general knowledge studies for all schools" (p. 175). He introduced general sciences for Islamic schools and institutionalised Islamic education in all schools for all levels. Mahmud also introduced the *halaqah* method and improvised the teaching of Arabic language to be more communicative and relevant to the daily needs of the Indonesian students. In the ninth chapter, Rosnani delineates Hamka's numerous works in various fields, particularly his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, which has been very helpful in elucidating the *fiqh* and legal issues in the social context of Indonesia. In the tenth chapter, Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi examines Imam Zarkasyi's (1910-1985) attempts in developing a new type of *pesantren* that aims to provide a balanced and an integrated education through modern education, yet maintaining the spirit of the *pesantren*, i.e., to be well versed in Islamic knowledge and exhibit good Islamic characters. Imam Zarkasyi founded the *Pondok Modern Darussalam* and introduced a limited study period, examinations, a grading system, and different levels of Arabic starting with the introductory level of reading and writing simple Arabic before proceeding to the next level of learning grammar. This effort to integrate the two sciences could be considered an attempt to Islamise knowledge. In the eleventh chapter, Fatah explores Harun Nasution's reforms of higher Islamic studies in Indonesia through his emphasis on philosophy, which replaced the lecture method with the discussion and seminar method, promoted the culture of writing systematically,

logically and critically, and introduced a new approach to understand Islam in a sound and universal manner (as opposed to the *fiqh*, *taṣawwuf* or Islamic studies oriented approach). Finally, the concluding chapter of the book briefly discusses the future directions of the renaissance of Islamic education in the Malay world.

The book is significant as it sheds light on some of the prominent intellectuals who have contributed in developing Islamic education and its educational institutions in the Malay world. Each author determines the focus of discussion according to the strengths of the scholar. However, a weaknesses of the book is the lack of a clear and standardised structure in providing biographical information about each scholar whose contributions were analysed. On a positive note, the chapters analyse the direct and indirect contributions made by the scholars toward the cause of Muslim and Islamic education in the Malay Archipelago. Although the discussions offer criticisms of the scholars' works for favouring Western science (p. 61), the book tends to draw on the positive contributions made by the scholars.

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**Rediscovering the Qur'an: The implications of time in Islam. By Abubakar Abdullahi Fari. Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited, 2011, pp. 285. ISBN: 978-125-864-0 (paperback).**

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Abubakar Abdullahi Fari has presented a unique and distinctive work on the implication of time in Islam. Despite the fact that the author is an engineer by profession, this book demonstrates his solid grounding in Islamic knowledge. If not for *Time Utilisation (Islamic Perspective)* (Lagos: Olucouger Prints, 2002) by Abu Maimunah Ahmad Bn Muhammad Bello; *Time Management from Islamic and Administrative Perspective* (Riyadh: Al-Juraisi Foundation, 2008) by Khaled Abdul-Rahman Al-Jeraisy; and *Time in the Life of the Muslim* (Cairo: Islamic INC. Publishing, 1999), an English translation of Dr. Yusuf al-