



# AL-SHAJARAH

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# AL-SHAJARAH

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*Al-Shajarah* is a refereed international journal that publishes original scholarly articles in the area of Islamic thought, Islamic civilization, Islamic science, and Malay world issues. The journal is especially interested in studies that elaborate scientific and epistemological problems encountered by Muslims in the present age, scholarly works that provide fresh and insightful Islamic responses to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world. *Al-Shajarah* will also consider articles written on various religions, schools of thought, ideologies and subjects that can contribute towards the formulation of an Islamic philosophy of science. Critical studies of translation of major works of major writers of the past and present. Original works on the subjects of Islamic architecture and art are welcomed. Book reviews and notes are also accepted.

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## ***Review Essay***

### **TARIQ RAMADAN’S IDEA OF REFORM**

#### *Realizing Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and Development of Islamic Economics (IE)*

*Jasmin Omercic<sup>1</sup>*

The necessity for reforms in the Muslim world is vivid and indubitable to many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and has been addressed countless times. Reasons for reforms are just as apparent in contemporary times as a century ago or even earlier. Muslims have often been prevented from or have failed in and resisted reforms due to occupational-colonial, general socio-political, economic, traditional or *taqlīd* (blind belief/following) circumstances. Distinct responses and solutions to such states of Muslim and general human affairs have been the concern of Tariq Ramadan. His idea of reform reveals ignorance as the root cause of such state of affairs. It is therefore the task of this essay to explore the idea of Ramadan’s reform. He emphasized the need for integration and dialogue among scholars of texts (*‘ulamā’ al-nuṣūṣ*) and contexts (*‘ulamā’ al-wāqī‘a*). In contrast, ignorance will and always cause Muslim leaders to prefer preservation of power through marginalization of genuine intelligentsia and selection of fake, obedient and pleasing advisors. Socio-political and economic affairs worsened under such leadership, and colonialism or occupation became easier to materialise. Moreover, ignorance spread further and *taqlīd* ensued while the clinging to outmoded traditional values persisted. Numerous books, besides those of Ramadan, have described such Muslim degeneration and ignorance in detail. Thus, it is known that

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in as much as colonial occupation had deprived Muslims of reforms, they had often resisted it out of ignorance.

However, Ramadan is aware that attempted reforms have still instigated much constructive change and raised the awareness of a sizeable part of Muslims about their respective identities and more importantly the centrality of Islam as a way of life. In the course of such activism, the world learned as well. Reforms throughout the Muslim world have never totally rejected or hereticated other (western or eastern) worldviews, but claimed the right to filter the permissible, acceptable, legal, *Sharī'ah*-compliant, authentic, authoritative and contextually adaptable aspects of alternative worldviews. Thus, central to Ramadan's idea of reform is that the freedom to decide for one's own destiny represents the ability to choose what people perceive as the best alternative. However, any choice among alternatives is fluid and subject to moderation. The need for reforms, which can instil moderation in contemporary times, has been the focus of Ramadan's thought for decades. His book *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation*<sup>2</sup> and other intellectual contributions are for that reason particularly relevant to the agenda of reforming Islamic thought generally and of Islamic Economics (IE) in particular. *Radical Reform* is among the most outstanding communiques about the necessity and importance of reform in the twenty-first century. It endorses the significance of IE in the process of reform when reassessing the nature and course of IE development. *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*<sup>3</sup> is another of Ramadan's books that appraises the idea of Islamic banks and IE generally. However, he proposed reforms which entail a revision of the process of Muslim development through reattachment with Islamic tradition. The tradition is multidisciplinary and ensures sustainable and environmentally friendly economic development.

The process of reform, as Ramadan envisaged it, is central to genuine Muslim intellectual and spiritual awakening and integration through transformation instead of mere adaptation in daily chores to

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<sup>2</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2001).

the national and international agendas of developing an ever more environmentally friendly, sustainable and governable world (ESG agenda). Hence, the rationale of this review is the significant impact of such a process of reattachment and integration with Islamic tradition, and the fact that it was communicated by one of the most outspoken Western voices of reformative Islam since the last few decades of the twentieth century. Reformative Islam is by no means any new type of Islam. Rather it refers to the reformation of the way Muslims and non-Muslims understand Islam and, of course, how Muslims practice it. Thus, 'reformative' refers to the reawakening of the spirit of Muslims and non-Muslims intellection about Islam and its comprehension as a universal message to humankind. Ramadan truly communicated how such affirmative actions would lead towards spreading what Islam means literally, namely 'peace'. In his book, *The Quest for Meaning*<sup>4</sup>, Ramadan had a similar objective of enriching our understanding of the world through the lenses of Islam or 'peace'. That is why he ardently invites Muslim communities particularly and humanity at large to adopt the proposed idea of reform. It is radical because it rejects adaptation. It aims to transform adaptational practices, habits or norms and revive marginalized genuine and universal Islamic teachings. That aligns with contemporary efforts of 'Integration of Knowledge (IoK)' spearheaded by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT).

Courageously, Ramadan challenges everyone considering reform to be a dangerous foreign perversion and denial of own principal beliefs, or the denial of social multiplicity or plurality, multi-ethnic and cultural diversity, and multi-perspectives on all aspects of life. Many countries across the globe have exemplified such peaceful coexistence and integration via the will for dialogue, consensus and compromise. This surely is a message to Muslim dissenters towards Ramadan's overall work and idea of reform, and to those who consider him a disbeliever and traitor of Islam. However, it also refers to non-Muslim dogmatic rejectionists. Their rejections are based on personal or group prejudices about Islam which are rooted in the manipulative Orientalist discourse. Nobody

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<sup>4</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *The Quest for Meaning: Developing a Philosophy of Pluralism* (London: Penguin, 2010).

has better described the prejudicial Orientalist narratives on Islam and Muslims than Edward Said in *Orientalism*. Nevertheless, Ramadan had sought throughout decades of his work and thought to dispel such bigotry about Islam and Muslims through intellectual discourse among scholars of texts (*'ulamā' al-nuṣūṣ*) and contexts (*'ulamā' al-waqi'a*). The book *Radical Reform* qualifies him to be viewed as a pioneer in such kind of intellectual discourse and its implications for reform. It is an authentic academic contribution which is rooted in and refers to reliable textual sources, aligned with the *Sharī'ah* (Islamic law) and common/international law, its goals, scientific tradition and practices. Extant Muslim and non-Muslim reform movements based on customary or traditional textual interpretation have proved to be ineffective and only adaptational to the contemporary human crisis, particularly that of the Muslims. Undeniably, the book addresses the non-Muslims as well, considering them crucial for the reform to succeed. Ramadan's appreciation of the non-Muslim significance in the radical reform is evident in his *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad*.<sup>5</sup> He explained in the book how non-Muslims, particularly some Christians, recognized Muhammad (ﷺ) as a Prophet. The book refers, for example, to a Christian slave named Addas, originating from Nineveh in Al-Shām area, who approached to help the Prophet (ﷺ) after the inhabitants of Ṭāif chased him away. Another instance is the well-known Muslim asylum in Abyssinia under the Christian King Negus.

Therefore, the Muslim discovery of solace, compassion and safety among Christians is a fact that reverberates and relevantises Ramadan's idea of reform. It leads to the pursuit of convergence paths to each other and abandonment of the contemporary adaptational practices which are results of sheer bigotry, prejudice and dogmatism. Likewise, it is a fact that Ramadan communicated his thought in books which were published in the West, where he was raised, educated and lives. Therefore, he, like many others, has equally found solace, compassion and safety in the West, a dominantly Christian world. However, the spread of atheism has

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<sup>5</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad* (London: Penguin Books, 2008).



been diminishing the importance of Christianity particularly and religion generally since long ago. Thus, Ramadan's call for reform strives to reinstate the role of religion via integration of knowledge (IoK) and mutual support of each other's aspirations in life. Being aware that his conceptualization of reform and integration as such are not without flaws, Ramadan admits the possibilities of failure. However, such failures facilitate learning and further trials. The idea of his thought and aspiration for greater integration, sustainable, environmentally friendly and peaceful reforms through coordination and collaboration is in congruence with the UN's SDGs, global corporate ESGs agenda or EU's Green Deal. Ramadan's idea of reform and the global goals, agendas or deals are alike in their aim to instil a more constructive and responsible relationship of individuals towards the environment, government and society at large. Such an aspiration is passionately argued in Ramadan's book *To Be a European Muslim*<sup>6</sup>. Therein, he pleaded Muslims to genuinely integrate their respective nations by following the formulas of 4-Ls: learn the nation's Language, respect its Laws, be Loyal to the society and stand for the Liberty of all citizens. Such an integration should be part of reformative Islam in contemporary times, whereby Muslims would become pro-active individuals in all spheres of social life, including the religious. However, it equally motivates non-Muslims of various nationalities to teach their respective Languages, abide by their respective Laws, maintain social Loyalty, and promote Liberty for all. Similar appeals for greater engagement and constructive dialogues between Muslims and non-Muslims are to be found in Ramadan's book *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*<sup>7</sup>.

Rather notably, however, his *Radical Reform* provides a comprehensive conceptualization of the meaning of 'reform' and promotes 'universal integration' on the social, national and international levels and 'individual integration' as a responsibility of each individual for oneself. The book discusses the classical views of fundamentals of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) of Shāfi'ī's deductive

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<sup>6</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

and Hanafi's inductive approaches to attract the attention of Muslims within their own frame of mind and demonstrate the permissibility of the integration (IoK) from the Islamic tradition. After decades of thinking and writing about Islam, Muslims, the West, modernity, engagement and the Islamic tradition generally as attested to by his earlier publications<sup>8</sup>, Ramadan came up with *Radical Reform* which is one of his latest publications. Ramadan analyzed and synthesized the schools of higher objectives of law (*maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*) to show how contemporary and relevant Islamic teachings are in resolving extant problems of society. After understanding certain historical and contemporary trends and contexts as pre-requisites, the radical reform becomes complete and is genuinely viable through identification of a new geography of *uṣūl al-fiqh* sources such as *wāqī'a* (context/reality) and field experts (Muslims/non-Muslims). It helps to better comprehend and govern the increasingly complex world and most importantly to benefit humanity. Ramadan's reform scales through case studies like 'Ecology and Economy' which led him to particularly address IE practices. Other referred case studies are medicine and Islamic ethics, culture and arts, women, society, education and power, and ethics. All are important and greatly depend on availability of economic resources. Thus, Ramadan's insights into IE development deserves analysis.

Ramadan is always promoting a non-adaptational reform of audacious and ingenious style that promises scientific and systematic solutions to transform the Muslim 'being' per se yet is of universal nature and equally benefits non-Muslims. His vision is not limited to traditional scholarly methods of *ijtihād* (objective legal reasoning) upon sound, reliable and confirmed texts. It transcends the authority of 'only *Sharī'ah* scholars' by integrating efforts of 'scholars (experts) of other fields' regardless of religious or any denomination.

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<sup>8</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2010). Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2001).

Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Tariq Ramadan, *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad* (London: Penguin Books, 2008).

His reform argues for innovation and creativity within the realm of changeable (*mutaghayyirāt*) spheres of Islam and for greater human welfare. Thereby, the idea of reform surpasses mere cooperation or *ijtihād* of scholars of texts ('*ulamā' al-nuṣūṣ*) and contexts or reality ('*ulamā' al-wāqi'a*). In short, *Radical Reform* shifts the centre of authority through multi-intra-confessional dialogue within the society, particularly the intelligentsia, whilst upholding the spirit and letter of *Sharī'ah* as much as other laws, rules and regulations.

Ramadan's idea of reform is particularly relevant to Muslims who are seeking to review modalities of '*iṣlāḥ* (reform) and *tajdīd* (renewal) through fusion of demonstrated 'adaptational reforms' (religious, philosophical and legal achievements)' with 'transformational ones' (spiritual, intellectual and scientific achievements). Therefore, dealing with circumstantial complexities, the necessary reassessment of the content and structure of *uṣūl al-fiqh* in light of *wāqi'a* (context/reality), broadening of Islamic centres of authority via inclusion of respective field experts (Muslim/non-Muslim) as complementarities in *ijtihād* helps us to ignite and demonstrate how adaptational modalities can become transformational.

Therefore, Ramadan argues that rereading of texts (*al-nuṣūṣ*) would facilitate transcendence of the default comprehension of '*iṣlāḥ* and *tajdīd*' in corresponding cultural-historical and socio-economic contexts. In fact, such was the quest of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) while remaining steadfast to the Qur'anic message. The requisite linkage of *uṣūl-fiqh* and *wāqi'ah* facilitates the reassessment and clarification of the unchangeable (*thawābit*) and changeable (*mutaghayyirāt*) teachings in the Qur'an. Principles like Islamic fundamentals (*shurūṭ al-islām*) and fundamentals of belief (*shurūṭ al-imān*) are forever non-modifiable. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) sometimes conceded to *rukhas* (facilitation) in principles as well. Failure to deal dynamically with these contentions always led to Islamic civilizational demise and blind imitation (*taqlīd*). This is where Ramadan emphasized the need for alternative analytics and integrative Muslim and non-Muslim participatory approach towards transformation of *ijtihād* practice. Such reforms broaden Islamic centres of authority and raise individual awareness about Islam as a

way of life. Thus, the representation of reformative Islam in this manner demonstrates to non-Muslims the comprehensiveness of Islamic thought and practical solutions to recurrent human problems. Ramadan perceives that such reforms would spark the change of Muslim behaviour from being 'adaptational' to 'transformational'. Innovation and creativity are immanent in the process of reform while addressing challenges of Muslims and modernity. Such a reform is forward looking or having a futurist outlook through a purposive integration (IoK) *maqāṣid*-oriented methodology.

The integration of knowledge (IoK) of such radical reform processes would enable the rise of ethics of human liberation and a positive and inclusive outlook on life. It is important to note that Ramadan tries to avoid labelling his idea of reform as Islamic but prefers instead to emphasize integration as the key to success. While most Muslims have a relatively strong religious conviction, Ramadan perceives that social, national and international welfare and integration among Muslims and non-Muslims is incumbent in contemporary times. This is particularly important for Muslims in the West. However, Muslim-majority countries should excel in dialogue and institutionalize efforts which reflect their reasoning. In that way, Muslims could synthesize Shāfi'ī's deductive and Hanafi's inductive approaches to *Sharī'ah* application and develop a workable IoK framework. In addition, a continual reference to *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) as exemplified by Imam al-Juwainī, al-Ghazālī, al-Shāṭibī and others could facilitate the prioritization of affirmative actions. It could well be the case that what was previously classified as 'secondary' in the *Sharī'ah* may now be viewed as 'primary'. In other words, the door of *ijtihād* has never been more widely open than it is today.

Less than a decade before *Radical Reform*, Ramadan articulated some of the necessary reforms in his *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*. He critically assessed the Muslim encounter with modernity and defined the challenges that had deprived them of an authentic development. Among the major challenges are Muslim disunity and extant comprador groups loyal to Western powers. Those groups are integral to their respective Muslim national government machineries, i.e., the military. The German

translation of the book (*'Der Islam unter Der Westen: Von Der Konfrontation zum Dialog der Zivilisationen'*)<sup>9</sup> promotes it as a reform from confrontation to dialogue of civilizations. Thus, the reform necessitates Muslims and non-Muslims to educate themselves about the modalities of thought, possibilities and potentialities if they are to be united at the local, national and transnational level. Collaboration with non-Muslims is inevitable and commendable under conditions which do not compromise each other's unity.

The cognitive frame of Ramadan's radical reform is applicable but yet to be practically realized. It necessitates a network of scholars to agree upon a plan of execution. Ramadan has suggested such a networking in most of his writings, especially in *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* and *Radical Reform*. In both works, particularly the former, Ramadan acknowledges the significance of Islamic banks which in contemporary times refers to the Islamic economics, banking and finance (IEBF) industry. Islamic banking has been gaining momentum of growth since the mid-nineteenth century. It prompted Ramadan to appraise its potential impact and at the same time to criticise its deviation from its initial vision and its sheer reliance on 'Islamic' labelling to survive. Ramadan considers 'Ecology' – referring to the environmental protection, maintenance and cleanliness – as essential to greater social, animal and herbal welfare. It also fosters growth of the *halal* certification industry which appeals to Muslim demand. However, even non-Muslims find the *halal* certification to be a great indication of healthier lifestyle. Nevertheless, the IEBF industry and proper 'Ecology' are viewed as complementary and interdependent. Thus, Ramadan recommends radical reforms in IEBF following the divergence of Islamic economists from the initial intention of structuring a socially welfare-enriching economy. In his view, Muslim unity at the local, national and transnational levels is crucial to the promotion of a genuine IEBF development. The integration of different levels of unity would lead to greater degrees of IoK. Otherwise, the label 'Islamic' remains a delusion and IEBF would just be observing the letter without the spirit of *Shari'ah* and merely replicating

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<sup>9</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Der Islam und der Westen: von der Konfrontation zum Dialog der Zivilisationen* (Köln: MSV-Verlag, 2000).

conventional economic practices.

However, Ramadan maintains in *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* that IEBF has the grassroots potential to uplift social welfare and to remain steadfast once it scales up. In fact, numerous projects of IEBF have contributed to social welfare, institutionalization, public goods etc. Hence, describing the industry or IE discipline as a simple perversion of conventional economics is hardly justifiable, not least in the view of Ramadan. His idea of reform reveals that everything leading to incremental degrees of goodness in light of the *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is permissible, compliant and contextually adaptable. After all, replication of IEBF is apparent in conventional economic practices through Islamic banking windows or full-fledged counterparts to conventional banks in order to serve and enhance social welfare. Thus, harnessing the enormous potential within IEBF could be the starting point of 'radical reform' of the extant practices. Current institutional infrastructure and relative interconnectedness among Muslims in particular and with non-Muslims more generally render it viable provided there is a willingness for dialogue and IoK.

Therefore, Ramadan doubtlessly accepts an alternative economics but preferably without the label 'Islamic'. The integrational and inclusive nature of Ramadan's idea of reform focuses on the substance of transformation and impact rather than on labels. Lastly, it is clear that Ramadan's direction of reform is in line with genuine IEBF aspirations. Ramadan's conceptualization of reform represents the IoK as the basis of IEBF development. Revisiting this basis and other philosophical foundations for the discipline/industry development, have been the focus of substantial research programs. Thus, Ramadan's idea of reform complements a plethora of scholarly efforts and vice versa. The convergence of their findings and conclusions sheds light upon the future human and particularly Muslim reawakening. Ramadan's idea of reform is undoubtedly a commendable contribution within the contemporary agenda of IoK. It strives to promote a universal ethics, liberation of humanity and planetary protection. The practical realization of this goal would be a future task of '*ulamā' al-nuṣūṣ*' and '*ulamā' al-wāqī'a*'. Therefore, any effort towards the actualization of

Ramadan's idea of reform, particularly in IEBF, may be viewed as ground-breaking and astounding, and representing a prodigious compass for further affirmative action and formulation of actionable policies.

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ALBERT CAMUS, THE ABSURD AND MARTYRDOM BY  
ARIEF S. ARMAN  
*A Rejoinder*

*Malick Elias*<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for another insightful edition of the *Al-Shajarah*, ISTAC Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilisation, Volume 26, Number 1, 2021. Moreover, an extended appreciation for the opportunity to post this rejoinder to the above-named article. At a glance, 'martyrdom' captures the attention and conjures questions, especially when positioned with Camus' absurdism often read as the 'meaninglessness.' But 'suicide' defined as killing oneself, and a suicide attack as killing oneself and others in the process<sup>2</sup> is not martyrdom. Etymologically, in the old English, a 'martyr' is a 'witness' originating from the Greek 'mártur'<sup>3</sup> and this meaning is consistent with the Arabic term *shahīd*, literally a witness. Arman is not conflating the two, but one has to read some distance into the article to determine that. For instance, after briefly mentioning justifications for suicide found in Paul Gill (2007) "A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing" – such as a pathological disposition to violence; an authoritarian personality; delusional religious hermeneutics; revenge; a hatred for other ways

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<sup>2</sup> Pearson-Longman (2005) edition.

<sup>3</sup> John Ayto, *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins*, 1990.

## TRANSLITERATION TABLE

### CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR
ء	‘	‘	‘	ز	z	z	z	گ	—	g	g
ب	b	b	b	ژ	—	—	ř	ل	l	l	l
پ	—	p	p	ژ	—	zh	j	م	m	m	m
ت	t	t	t	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n
ٹ	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ş	ه	h	h	h <sup>1</sup>
ث	th	th	th	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ş	و	w	v/u	v
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḍ	ḍ	ž	ی	y	y	y
چ	—	ch	çh	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah	—	-a <sup>2</sup>
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al <sup>3</sup>	—	—
خ	kh	kh	kh	ع	‘	‘	‘	<sup>1</sup> – when not final <sup>2</sup> – at in construct state <sup>3</sup> – (article) al - or l-			
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğ				
ڈ	—	—	ḍ	ف	f	f	f				
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	k				
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	k			

### VOWELS

	Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	—
	و	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī
Doubled	ي	iy (final form i)	iy (final form i)
	و	uww (final form ū)	uvv
		uvv (for Persian)	uvv
Diphthongs	و	au	ev
	ی	ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	u	u	u or ū
	ی	i	o or ö
	ی	i	ı

### URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. چھ jh گھ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.



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