



# 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.

The journal is published twice a year, June-July and November-December. Manuscripts and all correspondence should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief, *Al-Shajarah*, F4 Building, Research and Publication Unit, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), No. 24, Persiaran Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Taman Duta, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. All enquiries on publications may also be e-mailed to [alshajarah@iium.edu.my](mailto:alshajarah@iium.edu.my). For subscriptions, please address all queries to the postal or email address above.

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## ***Book Reviews***

**Rached Ghannouchi and Andrew F. March, *On Muslim Democracy: Essays and Dialogues*. Oxford University Press, New York City, 2023. 248 pp. ISBN 9780197666876.**

*Reviewer: Phar Kim Beng, PhD. Senior Independent Columnist of the Jakarta Post (since 2019) and the CEO of Strategic Plan Indo Pacific Arena (SPIPA) in Kuala Lumpur and London (strategicpipa.org). Email: [pharkb7@gmail.com](mailto:pharkb7@gmail.com)*

The compatibility of Islam and democracy is an old theme. The concept of *Shura* or, consultation, for example, is often invoked by many as one of the finest examples of democratic dialogue on how a leader could be elected after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The Messenger of Islam himself is often seen as a democrat. After all, he often made decisions through deliberate consultations.

Then again, how could the Prophet (ﷺ) not have made any decisions in any way or form that is democratic when he led eighty out of a total of eighty-seven military expeditions during his role as the Messenger of Islam. Why then the need to explain time and again that Islam is compatible to democracy? Why can't it be taken as an article of faith for the lack of a better word?

One of the answers might well revolve on "freedom." While Rashid Ghanouchi, the leader of the En-Nahda Party in Tunisia who is now placed under detention, is completely devoid of any physical and other freedom, it is not without any sense of irony that "freedom," is what he is most concerned with among ten other essays that have been collated by Andrew F. March.

Placed as the first essay, Rashid Ghanouchi was adamant that Islam is not against freedom and, in turn, any central tenets of Western civilizations. Just as there is "no compulsion in Islam," the very essence of Islamic jurisprudence or "Shariah," cannot contain any items that are coercive in nature. This is all good and well. Islam permits *vox populi* to reign supreme. But it is also just as vital to remember that democracy is not strictly the disarticulation of the

interest of the majority. If anything, there must be no tyranny of the minority too.

Elsewhere, Rashid Ghanouchi recalls his meeting with Algerian philosopher of history Malik Ben Nabi in the 1960s. Rashid Ghanouchi ennobled Malik Ben Nabi as the successor to Ibn Khaldun, whom the West often referred to as the Father of Sociology; assuming that the German sociologist Max Weber is not given that title to begin with.

But in his encounter with Malik Ben Nabi, when Rachid Ghanouchi was merely in his early twenties, the latter explained that Malik Ben Nabi was quick to correct him that "Islam was not a civilization." If anything else, "Islam was a revelation." Rachid Ghanouchi has no struggle and dilemma with the statement of Malik Ben Nabi. Rather Rashid Ghanouchi affirmed that precisely because Islam is a revelation the argument that Islam and democracy can co-exist peacefully and harmoniously is all the more compelling. Why?

Rashid Ghanouchi used the example of a family gathered around Iftar during Ramadan. While all the senses of the family members will predispose them to break the fast—to free themselves from the pangs of hunger and thirst—they nevertheless can exercise the necessary self-restraint to manage their vicissitudes of freedom. Islam and democracy can co-exist, in other words, since the closer a person is to God, the more he or she can exercise the measured ability to control all the wild urges of freedom.

On Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, Rachid Ghanouchi has passing references to them. This was after all a book that was written well before the events of October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023. Rashid Ghanouchi did not take any attitude that was critical against the two. Rather Rashid Ghanouchi argued that Islamic political movements, being what they are, as long as they understand the concept of freedom, can find their correct expression and organizational rationality. Instead of trying to overthrow the tyrants and what not, they can eke out a political space to allow the regal authorities, Sheikhs and what not to co-exist.

In the light of the war of dogs that had been unleashed against Hamas by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), with a battered eye

and a nodding approval from the West, it is anyone's wonder if Rashid Ghanouchi may still hold such a benevolent view?

In all, this is a book that is worth a careful reading, if not entirely deserving of a serious and systemic rumination. That being said, the threat facing political Islam is not just internal but geopolitically too. The existential issue facing political Islam has been outstripped by events of October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023.

The rise of Russia and China or the alliance that they have stitched together in the Treaty of Unlimited Cooperation on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022, has become a key axis against the West not merely the axis of resistance formed by Hamas, Hizbullah and Houthis in the current war in the Middle East and Iran.

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**Ziauddin Sardar, ed. *Emerging Epistemologies: The Changing Fabric of Knowledge in Postnormal Times*. London. IIIT and The Centre for Postnormal Policy and Future Studies, London, 2022. 184 pp. ISBN: 978-1-64205-659-4 (hardback); 978-1-56564-602-5 (paperback); 978-1-56564-012-2 (ebook).**

*Reviewer: Osman Bakar, Emeritus Professor, Al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal at ISTAC-IIUM, Kuala Lumpur. Email: osmanbakar@iium.edu.my and obbakar@yahoo.com.*

Ziauddin Sardar's recently edited book is a collection of articles by several authors on the interesting theme of emerging epistemologies brought about by what he terms "the changing fabric of knowledge in postnormal times." It is this theme that gave the book its catchy title. The book comprises six chapters. The first three chapters were respectively authored by Ziauddin Sardar, Christopher Jones, and Liam Mayo. Colin Tudge and Shamim Miah authored the last two chapters. Mayo and Miah co-authored the fourth chapter.

Preceding the chapters is a lengthy introduction by Sardar its editor, which he titled "Beyond the Epistemologies of Conquest and Desire." And succeeding the chapters is a likewise lengthy Afterword





## 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	ب	پ	پ	ز	ز	ز	ز	گ	—	g	g	g
ب	ب	ب	ب	ژ	—	—	ř	ل	l	l	l	l
پ	پ	پ	پ	ژ	—	zh	j	م	m	m	m	m
ت	ت	ت	ت	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n	n
ث	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ş	ه	h	h	h <sup>1</sup>	h <sup>1</sup>
ث	th	th	th	ص	ş	ş	ş	و	w	v/u	v	v/u
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḏ	ḏ	ž	ی	y	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	‘	‘	‘	—	—	—	—	—
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğh	—	—	—	—	—
ڈ	—	—	d	ف	f	f	f	—	—	—	—	—
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	q	—	—	—	—	—
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	—	—	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup> – when not final

<sup>2</sup> – at in construct state

<sup>3</sup> – (article) al - or l-

### 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 (for Persian)	uvv
Diphthongs	و	au or aw	ev
	ی	ai or ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	ا	u	u or ū
	ا	i	o or ö
	ا	i	i

### 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. جھ jh گھ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

# AL-SHAJARAH

Vol. 29, No. 1, 2024

## Contents

### ARTICLES

- ISLAMIC APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE AND EXTREMISM: CONTEXTUAL  
READING OF HADITHS ON THE MAHDI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKA  
*Mohammad Ismath Ramzy, Rahimi Md Saad and Rohan Gunaratna* 1
- THE BALIK-ISLAM PHENOMENON FILIPINO MUSLIM REVERTS –  
BETWEEN THE GULF COUNTRIES AND THE PHILIPPINES 25  
*Mohamed Quadir Harunani and Thameem Ushama*
- EXPLORING THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF *FIQH*:  
THE ROLE OF THE SOUL IN ACHIEVING *MAQĀṢID AL-SHARĪ'AH* 47  
*Nurul Ain Norman and Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah*
- THE CONFUSED WHALE OF THE CHINA SEA:  
WATER SYMBOLISM IN THE WORKS OF HAMZAH FANSURI 79  
*Amir H. Zekrgoo*
- FROM OBSERVERS TO PARTICIPANTS: SINO-MUSLIM INTELLECTUAL'S  
ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ISLAMIC WORLD IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY 99  
*Bao Hsiu-Ping*
- CRITICISMS ON ONTOLOGICAL RELATIVISM OF MODERN SCIENCE 127  
BY SYED MUHAMMAD NAQUIB AL-ATTAS AND SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR  
*Khalina Mohammed Khalili*
- THE MALAY EPISTEMOLOGICAL BACKGROUND IN  
THE ISLAMIC WRITINGS OF HAMZAH FANSŪRĪ 153  
*Tee Boon Chuan*
- REVIEW ESSAY**
- THE ISLAMIZATION OF THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO IN OTTOMAN MANUSCRIPTS 181  
*Alaeddin Tekin*
- חינוך, *CHINUCH*: ISRAEL'S EDUCATION SYSTEM AND QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY 195  
*Arief S. Arman*
- MANUSCRIPT STUDIES**
- DEVOTIONAL POETRY IN TECHNICAL MANUSCRIPT TERMINOLOGY:  
AN INTRODUCTION TO *THE ROSE GARDEN OF PURITY (GOLZĀR-E ṢAFĀ)* 207  
*Amir H. Zekrgoo and Mandana Barkeshli*
- BOOK REVIEWS** 223
- KEYNOTE EVENTS AND SPEECHES**
- A FEAST OF CIVILIZATIONS: THE LIFE AND MIND OF TOSHIKKO IZUTSU 231  
*Anwar Ibrahim*
- SILK ROAD, ISLAM, AND CONFUCIANISM 239  
*Osman Bakar*

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