

Dhūl-Qarnayn was among the three pious non-Prophet Muslim kings explicitly mentioned in the Qurʾān along with ʾIḡlūt and ʾTubbaʿ.

- Q 4:65 “may reflect that Muḥammad was viewed by his early followers as a *hakam*, an arbitrator, or as a *kahin*, a soothsayer” (Lowry, p. 84)!
- Contrary to the claim made by Asma Asfaruddin (p. 185), the general Sunni conception of precedence in the religion (*sābiqa*) does not put Successors in third place after the earliest *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār* but rather puts the remainder of the Companions in third place and the Successors in fourth place. As one of the prominent early Muslims put it in hyperbolic terms, “dust in the nostrils of Muʿāwiya is better than ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz!”
- “No Islamic rite plays a role analogous to that of the Christian Eucharist, which places the figure of Jesus firmly at the center of the ritual life of the community” (Holmes Katz, p. 139). On the contrary: reciting the Qurʾān does—as demonstrated by Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) in his 1961 *Comprendre l’Islam*—and, also more central a rite than even a daily Eucharist, the dozens of obligatory daily recitations of the *shahāda* in every twenty-four hours, not to mention the super-erogatory ones.

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Divided into four parts and fifteen chapters, *Philosophies of Islamic Education: Historical Perspectives and Emerging Discourses*, the fifth book in Routledge’s Research in Religion and Education Series, is said to “fill a void” (p. x) in the field of studies on Islamic education by addressing theological, pedagogic, and institutional issues on the subject and by bringing diverse, sometimes competing, ideas and practices of Islamic education under discussion. It begins with a promising overview by Mujadad Zaman (“Introduction”) which outlines

essential issues. From among the three chapters in Part I, which attempt to lay the theoretical foundations of the field, Tim Winter's bold analysis ("Education as 'Drawing-Out'"), depicting the bleak state of education among Muslims is not only illuminating, it also reads like foretelling of a scenario now taking shape under the tutelage of "modern-Muslim ministries of education, whose determination to emulate Western models has generated the kind of alienated psyche that seems so easily to support both secularity and fundamentalism, might find grounds for sobering reflection in more recent discussions that have evolved in the Western World" (p. 36).

Winter calls for "new types of institutions and curricula" in order to "retrieve what can be retrieved of the old religious wisdom enshrined in rigorously rational theologies and in spiritual inspirationalism and ethics, if there is to be any prospect for the retrieval of the integrity of the civilization's reading of its scripture. There should be a chaste awareness, however, that the older complementarity of disciplines and institutions may no longer be appropriate or feasible" (p. 38).

Part II, "Positioning Knowledge between the Student and Teacher", consisting of four chapters, brings the rich interplay of the traditional process of learning through student-teacher interactions into discussion. The chapters in this Part are of varying degree of importance; they range from theoretical discussion of key concepts (*adab*, *akhlāq*, *Iḥsān*, and *Ikhlās*) in the first essay by Abdullah Trevathan to a historically grounded essay by Sebastian Günther, which provides perspectives from a range of authorities and works, beginning with Abū Ḥanīfa's (148/767) *Kitāb al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim* ("The Book of the One Who Knows and the One Who Wants to Know"), "one of the earliest treatise in Islam with an explicit pedagogical approach" (p. 73), and ending with *Tadhkirat al-sāmiʿ wa-l-mutakallim fī ādāb al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim* ("The Memorandum for the Listener and the Speaker [in Teaching Sessions] Concerning the Rules of Behavior for the Learned and the Learner") of Ibn Jamāʿa (d. 733/1333). Günther's conclusions really summarize the essence of classical works: emphasis is on the human person and the central element of the process of education, for both the learner and the learned, is the perfection of their ethics.

In his "Disciplinarity and Islamic Education", Omar Anwar Qureshi explores "the ways sciences have been variously conceived in Islamic intellectual history". The essay is general and Qureshi does not relate the discussion to education, even as he suggests—toward the end of the essay—that Kalām theology can link various disciplines by being a "universal science". Talal Azem's "The Transmission of *Adab*: Educational Ideals and their Institutional Manifestations" provides a window into historical models of education in the Muslim world, where educational institutions were founded by patrons who

established endowments. The emphasis was on *adab* and “that is what kept premodern Muslim traditions of institutional education not merely personal, but profoundly human” (p. 122).

The first three chapters of somewhat disjointed Part III, “Schools, Universities, and Pedagogies”, bring together memories of a long-forgotten series of conferences on education, hyperbolically seen by the author Shaikh Abdul Mabud as “shaping the agenda of Muslim education in the future,” an information-rich overview of the trends in Muslim education in North America by Naeem Memon, a somewhat eulogizing article on Zaytuna College by Omar Qargha, and a totally out of place fourth chapter which throws the entire section in disarray.

The content of “Schools, Universities, and Pedagogies” is heterogenous. While Mabud’s chapter brings back some of the old information about the World Conferences, it does not critically present the intellectual, political, social, and historical forces that were at work in the organization of the “First World Conference on Muslim Education” in Makkah (March 31—April 8, 1977); it locates no shortcomings on the part of the organizers who brought together almost the entirety of the Muslim intellectual leadership of the time. Likewise, major political and social events that led to the emergence of the euphoria of a mini-revival find no mention in the chapter. Even though Mabud reproduces an insightful episode about the interview of Shaikh Hassan Al-i-Shaikh, the Saudi Minister of Education, and the subsequent letter written by Ashraf and Motiur Rahman to King Faisal, “that set the ball rolling” for the First World Conference on Muslim Education, this information-rich chapter lacks historical depth, and even as it analyzes the outcome of these conferences, it barely scratches the surface of an era requiring deeper analysis.

The title of Nadeem Memon’s article, “Diverse Communities, Divergent Aspirations? Islamic Schooling in the West” is somewhat stretched as the article only overviews Muslim communities and types of Islamic schools. Most of the discussion is based on snapshots from the websites of the schools, rather than solid textual sources. For instance, Sakina Circle is based on *Concentric Circles*, a book that provides a theoretical foundation for anchoring early childhood learning in the Qur’anic worldview. But instead of engaging that text, Memon’s discussion is limited to what he finds on the School’s website, which amounts to a few key terms. Likewise for the UK-based Deenway. It is also not accurate to use the “West” in the title because, obviously, the West is more than UK and North America. The article is information-focused; it hardly touches upon philosophies of education of the chosen schools and does not present any sustained analysis of the real educational challenges faced by Muslim communities living in the West.

In “An Olive Tree in the Apple Orchard”, Omar Qargha states that

“this chapter explores how Zaytuna College...is dealing with the challenge of negotiating the space between a theistic Islamic worldview and areas of knowledge that are based on secular epistemologies within the structure of a modern university” (p. 159). The reader who expects this to lead to a rich discussion of Zaytuna College’s actual courses and their relevance to the theme of the chapter (and the book) is disappointed by the subsequent discussion which merely scratches the surface of the discourse, even though it provides ample information about the structure and functioning of the College (which can be read on Zaytuna College’s website). Zaytuna is a bold experiment in Muslim Education, but it is, simultaneously, an attempt to build the fifth floor of a building without the first four. Notwithstanding the tremendous effort and resources which have gone into the making of this first Muslim College in America, which stands in stark isolation of anything else that Muslims have done to find a way out of the secularizing trends, the article fails to analyze this effort within the historical background of the overall and long struggle Muslims face with regard to education, both in the West and in the Muslim majority countries.

It is, however, the fourth chapter of Part III, “The ‘Hadith of Gabriel’: Stories as a Tool for ‘Teaching’ Religion” by Steffen Stelzer which becomes the odd addition to the book, because of the way Stelzer reduces the *ḥadīth of Gibrīl* to a story, conflates literary criticism, Ḥadīth, Qur’ān, and Qur’ān commentaries, misquotes al-Ghazālī (p. 179) and produces an intellectual chaos punctuated by a rapid appearance and disappearance of such diverse figures as Northrop Frye, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn al-‘Arabī. To claim that “for al-Ghazali (d. 1111 AD) the ‘knowledge of the stories (narrated) in the Qur’an’ belongs to the lowest and outermost level of the scale of Qur’anic sciences he establishes in his *The Jewels of the Qur’an*” and then pose this skewed understanding of what al-Ghazālī is actually doing in his short masterpiece against the question “*why* God, in the Quranic narrative, chose to teach His Prophet through stories” (p. 179) shows lack of understanding of Ghazālī’s work, which establishes that hierarchy within his discussion of the primary purpose of the Qur’an. Randomly transliterated Arabic words, confusion in reading of source material, minute, but ultimately futile analysis of certain aspects of the ḥadīth of Gibrīl, misreading of the Qur’ānic verses and sufi texts, and attempts to superimpose secular theories on sacred knowledge yield a confused text that stands out as an odd addition to the book.

Part IV, “Contemporary Debates”, is, once again, a disjointed collection of chapters diversely dealing with Principles of Democracy, Religious Pluralism, Islamization of Knowledge, and Pedagogical Limits to Critical Inquiry with respect to teaching Islam. The lack of linkage to the previous chapters makes these articles stand-alone thoughts, which may be valuable in their own right,

but which remain disjointed from the rest of the book.

Despite some good chapters and one outstanding article (by Tim Winter), *Philosophies of Islamic Education* does not deliver what it promises. It is a collection of diverse articles which may provide overviews of the subthemes related to Islamic education, but they do not come together as a cohesive narrative, yielding a historically rooted account of various philosophies of Islamic education. Editorial lapses (inconsistency of transliteration, styles used for quotations, the way dates are given) could have been avoided. Nevertheless, in a wide open field, one hopes that this effort would lead to further works on the subject.

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