

law, for instance, he particularly touched upon the question of polygamy, the wife's right to divorce and maintenance. He also discusses the female's share of inheritance, penal law, apostasy, and their human rights' implications.

Another strength of this introduction lies in the author's regular reference to the laws of Muslim countries. This makes discussions on Islamic law practical and real. Something that is often lost in modern discourse on Islamic law, as alluded to earlier. No doubt, not all areas of law are implemented by Muslim countries. Family law tends to be guided by Islamic teachings, but penal law and business law are often governed by secular law, even in Muslim countries. Despite this, there is enough law out there to enable thorough discussion on the application of Islamic law in the modern world.

Those areas of law which are not applied by many Muslim countries still have a place in the modern discourse in some countries and as possible future options for other Muslim countries. Despite the brevity of this introduction, Baderin attempts to provide some interesting possibilities on how international law and penal law would work in a modern context, were it to be ever applied. He alludes for example to the Charter of Madinah as a precedent for the recognition of secondary legislation in the form of treaties and statutes, within a state governed by Islamic legislation.

Finally, the author suggests that the period of 'stagnation' in Islamic law in some stages of Islamic history were due to political circumstances. One could perhaps add that the social circumstances and the domination of the four legal schools gave Muslims a comfort zone which many scholars did not want others to tamper with, hence leading to limited forms of *ijtihad* or change. Today, it could be argued that independent and proper legal reasoning is necessary given the new challenging circumstances. This introduction provides a good summary of the nature of Islamic law and many of its modern applications, which gives researchers and scholars a foundation to work with and expand on.

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THE BRUCE B. LAWRENCE READER: ISLAM BEYOND BORDERS, edited and with an introduction by Ali Altaf Mian. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2021, 462pp. ISBN: 9781478011293.

The Bruce B. Lawrence reader is a window into the mind of a master scholar who has spent a lifetime learning and teaching that Islam has much to offer to the world if understood properly. Starting off with Islam as his blank canvas,

guided by Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' (d. 1325) at his side, with Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) and Marshall Hodgson (d. 1968) as his methodological architects and Maqbul Fida Husain (d. 2011) as his sculptor, Bruce Lawrence embarked on a mission "to stage an argument for the political purchase and analytical value of compassionate, engaged scholarship on Islam and Muslims." Ali Altaf Mian, the editor, writes that "Lawrence's scholarship is one that crosses territorial and disciplinary boundaries to account for Islam's differences and multiplicity." The editor Ali Mian is one of the last students of Lawrence. It is he who has put this Reader together, arranging the materials not chronologically but loosely thematically. He should be commended for this service to knowledge. The twenty-four essays are arranged around six themes. Each theme follows a methodological approach in the study of religion: theorising, revaluing, translating, deconstructing, networking and reflecting. The 25th essay is an interview by the editor with Lawrence from 2018 during the latter's stay at Aligarh Muslim University.

The afterword is written by a friend and colleague Yasmin Saika who only has the highest praise for Lawrence. What stands out after reading the twenty-five essays in this book is that it feels like Lawrence oscillates between being a scholar of Islam and an Islamic scholar (chapter 12 feels like the type of stuff one would learn in a *khānqah* at the feet of a Sufi master); just as the afterword oscillates between being a biographical reflection and a classical Muslim hagiography (*tadhkirah*). Divine intervention led the author of the afterword to the door of Lawrence, "At that moment it became clear to me that the voice of the elderly man I had heard in India was the voice of Nizamuddin Awliya" (p. 434). The cover has a beautiful illustration from one of Lawrence's friends, MF Husain's 2008 painting (ch. 23). The editor has a general introduction in the beginning and then an introductory summary of each section highlighted by using a darker shade of paper. Below are summaries of selected chapters from the Reader sprinkled throughout with my own reflections.

Part 1: Theorising Islam (p. 25) helps to break away from the popular understanding of Islam that has haunted the public psyche: one that is strewn with bullets and strained with blood. An understanding whereby the body of the Muslim woman is a site of contestation. In contrast, Lawrence asks one to think of Islam differently. He cautions readers against reducing Islam to a single entity, and he proposes a polysemic view of Islam and to think about Islam in its broadest sense as a civilisational project. In chapter 1: *Introduction to Shattering the Myth* (p. 29), Lawrence draws attention to the fact that Islam is not inherently violent (this is repeated in numerous chapters including chapter 16) and that the lasting role of Islam in the world is one of hope. In the section of

many faces of Islam (p. 40) he posits that Islam is not only a religion, but also politics as well as a worldview. He argues that it is the experience of Muslim women that calls for a more nuanced approach to Islam and global change (see also ch. 15 Shah Bano case for a detailed study on a case related to Muslim women, also see ch. 24 for a ‘shattering’ view of some Muslim women vis-à-vis reflection on the divine).

Part 2: Revaluing Muslim Comparativists (p. 100). Revaluing and comparisons are two methodological devices used in the study of religion. They help to shed light on “self, society and cosmos.” In this section, Lawrence conducts a ‘metanalysis’ of four Muslim scholars: al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), Ibn Khaldūn and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898). In chapter 5: *Al-Biruni: Against the Grain* (p. 103), Lawrence goes on to discuss al-Bīrūnī, a polymath scientist famous for his history of India. Al-Bīrūnī wrote on disparate topics like geology, exotheology, geography and pharmacology. Chapter 6: *Shahrastani on Indian Idol Worship* (p. 113) carries on with the theme of Indian religion. Here, Lawrence revalued a more sympathetic voice on Indian religions. Whilst al-Bīrūnī fell into the twin pitfall of intellectual and political imperialism, Lawrence believes that al-Shahrastānī is a gentle admiring foe. In his book on heresiology, *al-Milal wa-l-Nihal*, al-Shahrastānī viewed certain Hindu sects (Vaisnavas and Saivas) through the lens of the Qur’ānic ‘Sabians’; thus attributing to them the designation of *ahl al-kitāb*. Lawrence argues that one can only arrive at this reading through a detailed study of al-Shahrastānī’s understanding of the Sabians and then juxtaposing this with his view on Hinduism in the section of *arā’ al-hind*. This chapter (and the next) is a remarkable display of Lawrence’s attention to details and his ability to break down complex ideas into beautifully crafted prose.

Chapter 7: *Introduction to Ibn Khaldun’s Muqaddimah* (p. 124). The *Muqaddimah* remains Ibn Khaldūn’s inspired legacy. With the verve of a wordsmith and the eye of forensic analyst, Lawrence lays bare the analytical purchase of the full title of the *Muqaddimah*, a simultaneous play on grammar, history and tradition (p. 133). For Lawrence, Ibn Khaldūn’s uniqueness lies in being simultaneously a jurist as well as a litterateur for whom attention to words, both denotation and connotation, are paramount. His novelty lies in linguistics, to use old terms in new ways and shed light on words that may reveal deeper layers for reflection. For Lawrence, it is ‘*aṣabiyyah*, or the collective will, a peculiar type of *ijmā’*’ that permeates the entire *Muqaddimah*. Harking to the modern period, Lawrence focuses on another educator and thinker, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (ch. 8, p. 142). He shows that Khan was not antithetical to Sufism and co-religionists can find in him a worthy paradigm to emulate. Lawrence does this through a

quantitative and qualitative study of the writings of Khan pre-1870, especially his zealous favouring of Naqshabandī masters from his own family lineage. It was surprising to read that a modernist like Khan vehemently defended a controversial concept such as *taṣawwur-i shaykh* (visualising one's Sufi master) using rational arguments.

Part 3 Translating Sufism (p. 161). All translations are acts of interpretation. Translations take up many forms be they translations of dictions from one language to another or translation of meanings and cultures from one civilisation to another. In this part, Lawrence masterfully translates the meaning and essence of institutional Sufism. In chapter 9: *Can Sufi Texts be Translated?* (p. 165), starting with the idea that an act of translation is closer to speech than writing, Lawrence wrestles with how best to translate Sufi poetry from one hybrid language (Indo-Persian) to another (American English). Should a translation be a surrogate for the source language or rather depend heavily (contingent) on it? Can a coeval translation be ever achieved? Through a demonstration of different iterations of his translation of Nizamuddin Awliya's *Morals of the Heart*, Lawrence affirms that it is possible, but not without a linguistic fight. Related to this is another type of translation which does not require translating from a source language to a target language but rather translating the difference between a performative activity and an introspection. In *'Allah Remembered'* (ch. 12, p. 218), Lawrence raises the problem of translating a single word, *'dhikr'*. Is it an invocation or is it a remembrance? Is *dhikr* part of an inventory of activities, or is it an intense inward-looking introspection? It should be noted that this difference of understanding of the word *'dhikr'* also plays out in Islamic law (Qur'ān, 62: 9). Should the Friday sermon be delivered in Arabic because it is an invocation, or should it be given in the target language of the audience because it is a reminder?

If all translations are acts of interpretation, how does one interpret the pendulum swing of the 'rise and decline' of institutional Sufism? In chapter 10: *What is a Sufi order?* (p. 176), Lawrence and his co-author debunk the orientalist 'golden age syndrome' in general and Trimingham's Protestant-inspired tripartite history (ancient-medieval-modern) of the 'rise and decline of Sufism' in particular. For them, it is not so much 'rise and decline' than an ongoing tension and paradox between utopia and renewal (*tajdid*). By using the history of the Chisti order as a case study, the authors draw up a five-division historical category based on faithfulness to Chisti norms and values and not on greatness and decline. In a similar vein, chapter 11: *Sufism and Neo-Sufism* (p. 191) is a broad-brush history of Sufism from the 19th to the 21st century.

The 19th century has been described as the century of African Sufism, the 20th as the century of Asian Sufism and the 21st as the century of Euro-American Sufism. Both 19th and 20th century Sufis were engrossed in opposition and resistance to colonialism. This debunks the destructive dichotomy of ‘good Muslim/bad Muslim’ with the former being identified with those who are politically inactive, especially Sufism. The 21st century ushers in the problem of the democratisation of knowledge and the commercialisation of spirituality and Sufi paraphernalia. It is also the era when Sufism acutely transcended Islam (through the works of the likes of Inayat Khan) giving the impression that Sufism is all about feeling good and having a wonderful experience. For this reason, some scholars are now making a distinction between Sufism and *taṣawwuf*, the latter including within it the entire gamut of Sufi practices including self-imposed *mujāhadah* (hardship).

Part 4. Deconstructing religious modernity (p. 229). Deconstruction as a heuristic device helps to break down complex ideas into smaller segments to conduct microanalysis. This in return leads to a synthesis of ideas to paint a more nuanced and accurate picture of reality. In this section, the chapters are threaded together as a way of challenging the cliché that Islam is a religion of terror. The first three chapters of the section deal with an accurate analysis of why ‘extremism’ exists in Islam, the fourth chapter deals with how Muslims are on the receiving end of extremism. The crux of chapter 13: *Fundamentalism as a Religious Ideology in Multiple Contexts* (p. 233) is that fundamentalism is an ideology which conjoins truth with meaning. It is a modern phenomenon borne out of tensions created by the modern world and, especially, the modern nation state. It has historical antecedents but no ideological precursor. It is religious nevertheless clearly because it borrows from the resources of scripture and religious ideas. This is what separates fundamentalism from other separatist movements. Chapter 15 (p. 262) on Osama bin Laden homes in on this further. Bin Laden is a modernist in the sense that his mission mimics those of secular separatist movements like the Red Brigades and ultra-left groups that practised terrorism in Europe in the 1970s, but with an Islamic flare. In this sense Bin Laden is a counterterrorist, and his mission can only be understood against the backdrop of American imperialism and foreign policies. The Shah Bano (d. 1992) case on the other hand (ch. 14, p. 255) highlights the precarious nature of living as a Muslim minority and having parallel legal systems especially when it is applied ad hoc. It also throws light on identity politics, who has the right to speak on behalf of the Muslim community and the meaning of subjectivity as a Muslim (woman).

In chapter 16: *Muslim Engagement with Violence* (p. 274), Lawrence traces the genealogy of violence in Islam. He poses several pertinent questions: Do we begin with 9/11 or 611? Is violence waged by an Islamic empire or nation always an expression of jihad or religious violence? Is warfare, when declared by a Muslim ruler, always and everywhere a reflex of Islamic norms and values? Starting with 611, Lawrence draws upon the *Sirah* of the Prophet? He demonstrates that Muslims were on the receiving end of violence. It was only in the latter ten years of his ministry that the Prophet used violence as a survival strategy. Though the Prophet resorted to violence, he did not embrace it (p. 279). For Lawrence, Jihad as a doctrine of military warfare was only fully realised as a reaction to the Crusaders. Jihad was a product of the rise of Islam and not its cause (p. 282). In the modern period, nearly all Islamic violence was a result of European meddling, whether in the form of revival, reform or fundamentalism. "All these revivalist movements were violent, yet they followed a pattern of responsive violence" (p. 294). Lawrence argues that while on the face of it Bin Laden's mission seems to mimic 611 (Islam being an axis of hope), his hope is deferred since it cannot be achieved in this world. This is where he separated from the Prophet's teaching. And it is Lawrence plea to the majority of Muslims to prepare for an eventuality beyond the diatribe of apocalyptic doomsayers.

Part 5 Networking Muslim Citizenship (p. 305). The fifth methodology for the study of Islam used by Lawrence is networking. The *ummah* is a network of disparate beings with their different beliefs and practices, and yet all are joined through the ummatic node. Lawrence advocates a kaleidoscopic approach where polyvalence is celebrated and prejudice is shunned. In chapter 18: *W.D. Muhammad: The Qur'an as a Guide to Racial Equality* (p. 327), Lawrence posits that W.D. Muhammad's (WDM) mission was to lead his community from a separatist black movement to true 'al-Islam'. In this, WDM has the double challenge of plugging into (networking) a bigger culture (*ummah*) whilst maintaining their indigenous identities (as blacks) on the one hand, and educating the wider communities of the perils of racism on the other. For WDM, emancipation can only happen when true Islam and the Qur'an is properly understood. In a brilliant hermeneutical move, WDM relates the *rabb al-'alamīn* in the opening chapter with knowledge ('ilm due to the same root). Thus, Allah is the 'Lord of Systems of Knowledge'. It is this system of knowledge drafted in the cosmic book (i.e. the world) that can lead the Black Americans to salvation, as it could have led black slaves to emancipation (through learning to navigate the skies) even though they could not read. After all was the Prophet not an *ummī*?

Chapter 20: *AIDS Victims and Sick Women: Qur'an as Prescriptions for Mercy* (p. 345) discusses another type of networking. One that involves horizontal, vertical and electronic networking. *Ta'widh* or amulets have been used by Muslim healers from the beginning of Islam to ward off evil presences or cure ailments. The *ta'widh* tied on the neck is a petition and communication with God to cure the patient. In the age of the internet and networked computers, cyberspace is not only used as a tool for information, but also as a network through the electronic veins of which divine healings transmits from healer to patient. In the case of this chapter, from an Indonesian Sufi master to woman afflicted with the AIDS virus.

Part 6: Reflecting the Divine Other in Words and Images (p. 351). Reflecting as a methodological tool sits at the heart of Islam. What is Islam if not reflection (*tadabbur*, *tafakkur*, *fiqh*, *dhikr*, 'ilm, 'aql)? In chapter 21: *Approximating Saj' in English Rendition of the Qur'an* (p. 351), Lawrence raises an interesting point. He argues that Muslim translators are no better than non-Muslim translators in expressing the lyrical prose of the Qur'an. Lawrence shows high regard for Shawkat Toorawa who he calls, 'a superb linguist with a musical ear.' For Lawrence, Toorawa's rendition of the *basmalah* as 'In the name of God, Full Compassion, Ever Compassionate' not only captures the meaning of the verse accurately, but also captures the mood. *Rahmān* and *Rahīm* here are being translated not as derived nouns (*ism mushtaq*), but qualifying adjectives (*ṣifah*) of God, who not only is full of compassion, but his compassion is marked by an unending reflex of projecting compassion.

This Reader is only the tip of the iceberg of Lawrence's intellectual oeuvre. The book closes with an annotated bibliography of Lawrence's writing spanning half a century of scholarship on polar opposite topics such as Sufism and terrorism to controversial people like Osama bin Laden and Maqbul Fida Husain. What is missing from this oeuvre is any serious scholarship on Hadith. It was a joy to read this edited collection and I would recommend it to any serious students of Islam.

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SORCERY OR SCIENCE? CONTESTING KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE IN WEST AFRICAN SUFI TEXTS, by Ariela Marcus-Sells. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022. 214pp. ISBN: 9780271092294.

In this outstanding pioneering study on ideas and practices relating to magic within the Islamic tradition, Ariela Marcus-Sells traverses along a field of study