pilgrimage of year 9/631 it was ‘Alī who proclaimed the ‘verse of dissociation’ not Abū Bakr (p. 80b); he cites the hadith about Hīrā’ (from Bukhārī and Muslim) which alludes to Abū Bakr and ‘Uthmān (p. 76b), itself a blatantly pro-‘Uthmānid invention; and gives naïve credence to Abū Bakr’s improbable role in deciding the burial place of the Prophet (p. 82a).

The question arises whether the Editors can sustain their massive participation in the contents of *IEQ* throughout the remaining six volumes, or will they succeed in soliciting contributions from a wider range of qualified scholars? *IEQ* provides an instructive example of a new paradigm for Muslim intellectual discourse which unapologetically privileges the best of classical Islamic tradition—at least the Sunni textual legacy. Perhaps it may have been the preference of *IEQ*’s funders which imposed this limitation to majoritarian interpretive thought. One might ask if this limitation conforms to the editors’ declared intent “to avoid arrogating interpretive authority for itself”.

***An Introduction to Islam in the 21st Century.* Aminah Beverly McCloud, Scott W. Hibbard, and Laith Saud (Eds.). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. Paperback, pp. xviii+328. ISBN: 978-1-4051-9360-3. USD36.41**

Tauseef Ahmad Parray, Aligarh Muslim University*

Since John L. Esposito edited *The Oxford History of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1999) there has not appeared a comprehensive reference book covering Islamic history with regional studies from the classical to contemporary eras and throwing light on contemporary challenges. This team-edited volume *An Introduction to Islam in the 21st Century* provides an overview of the Islamic tradition for Western readers which captures its diversity, interpretive debates, and regional differences. It begins with the social and political realities informing 21st century Islamic practice, and examines varying interpretations and debates over hotly debated issues such as the phenomenon of militancy, Islamophobia, and the teaching of Islam in the West. The central approach is that the “image of Islam (particularly in the West) is very different from the lived reality of over a billion adherents around the globe” (p.4). An accessible introduction to Islam, *An Introduction to Islam in the 21st Century* announces itself as a western-oriented contemporary product.

Consisting of fifteen chapters divided into four parts and a conclusion, Part I gives an overview of the basic structures and debates within Islam; Islam in the modern context is examined in Part II; regional overviews in Part III – Africa, South Asia, Soviet Republic, Indonesia & Malaysia, Latin America & Caribbean;

while Part IV examines Islam in global context. Educational features are the discussion questions and suggested further readings at the end of each chapter, as well as frequent sidebars providing succinct information about personalities, events, famous places, or books; and a decent bibliography and index. Here are brief descriptions of several notable chapters.

Part I chapter 2 offers a brief overview of Islam—from classical to contemporary—ranging from the historical context in which Islam emerged and evolved, to the emergence of European colonialism and its legacy. It states (p. 14): “the story of Islam is in essence a story of the effect that a profound revelation...had upon the world” and central to this history is a “dramatic and ongoing narrative of different communities struggling to interpret the revelation, while synthesising their indigenous tradition with Islamic ethos”. Chapter 5 treats the development of “Islamic Political Theology” ranging from its origins to developments in the modern period, while taking an “unorthodox approach” to the phenomenon of Islamic “sects” (p. 107) through exploring the meanings of sects of varied spiritual types shaped by beliefs. Part II chapters 6 and 7 treats varied discussions on the ongoing debate about the proper relationship between Islam and political authority, or the “differing ways in which governments (and government leaders) have understood the proper relationship between Islam and the modern state” (p. 112). Chapter 8 examines “Muslims as Minorities in the West” by focusing on the four countries with the largest Muslim communities: U.S., U.K., France, Germany, with issues of integrating into Western society while retaining one’s cultural and religious heritage. It looks broadly at prominent issues raised in current research—education, building of mosques, freedom of religious expression, and political opportunity (p.159), and concludes that although these countries have each dealt with these issues differently, all of them find “genuine tolerance and inclusion a continuing challenge” (p. 169).

Part III Chapter 10 describes “Islam in South Asia” particularly India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, covering their historical background, Islamic movements, political Islam and gender issues. South Asia contains a “tremendously diverse Muslim society, featuring a mosaic of ideological, political, cultural, and economical complexity” (p. 204), adapted to local demographic and socio-cultural realities. Part IV examines Islam in a globalised world, with Chapter 14 devoted to the challenges of teaching Islam in the post-9/11 West. It offers a positive alternative for teaching about Islam in the 21st century, namely the “broader lens of “ecosystem” or “ecology” for exploring adaptations, movements, and relations of humans within a common environment” (p. 273). The events of 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror and related issues have challenged teachers in Europe and the Americas to research new pedagogies and information reservoirs (p. 271), while on the other hand teachers of Islamic

or Middle East studies are not only “faced with perennial problems of shrinking fifteen centuries of system operations into a quarter or a semester and into the discourses generated by those other *teachers* of Islam, but also with the everyday need to address emerging conflicts and announced terrorist threats” (p. 280).

This volume is especially concerned with questions of religion & violence, terrorism, and extremism, which Chapter 15 discusses directly. It addresses the Afghan war and rise of transnational militancy, ideas of Sayyid Qutb, the War on Terror, Islamophobia and the media, thereby exploring connections between religion and violence in general and within Islamic tradition in particular. For Hibbard, “Islamic militancy” or a “transnational militant (or ‘jihadist’) movement” occurred not in a vacuum but as an “unintended consequence of the United States’ support for the *mujahidin* in Afghanistan” (p. 287). The events of 9/11 far from “eradicating the scourge of terrorism” have justified an increased military presence and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – which appear to be “perpetuating the underlying conditions that give rise to extremism: poverty, authoritarianism and hopelessness” (p. 307).

The editors succinctly wrap up the main arguments running throughout the book in the Conclusion, highlighting the ‘uniqueness’ as well as newness of the book by arguing that this volume discusses Islam from a multidisciplinary vantage point in a more effective and accurate way, especially for the needs of a Western audience. The editors clearly state that the real challenge for the next generation “will be, not foreign armies... but the common ills of poverty, disease and ignorance, and the malice of extremism” (p. 314). Given the expertise of the contributors, its range of interconnected topics, multidisciplinary approach, comprehensiveness, and its educational features, this volume forms a welcome addition to reference works for undergraduate and graduate students of Islam.