

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Islam and Civilisational Renewal* features, as usual, a wide range of subjects and issues of concern beyond the confines of any particular country, even though Malaysia features prominently. This time, our journal contains **six articles**:

The first one, “Ethics and Finance: Perspectives of the *Sharī‘ah* and Its Higher Objectives (*Maqāṣid*)” is by myself and deals with some of the ethical foundations of Islam insofar as they are relevant to finance and commercial transactions. It also contains reflections by prominent commentators on the urgency of taking new measures to contain graft and greed and minimise the yawning gap that has developed between ethics and finance. Among my policy recommendations are the following:

- Integrating the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* in the operative rules of Islamic banking and finance;
- a self-critical and evaluative approach to Islamic banking and finance (IBF), which should open fresh avenues of enhancing ethical and social justice dimensions of the industry;
- ethical concerns and credibility factors require that IBF should develop more vigilance in order to reduce imitation and match-making of the conventional banking modalities and products.

The next article, “The Identity Crisis of the Contemporary Muslim *Ummah*: The Loss of Tawhidic Epistemology as Its Root Cause” is by **Osman Bakar**, Deputy CEO of IAIS Malaysia and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Science at Kuala Lumpur’s University of Malaya. Professor Bakar’s contribution traces the roots of this crisis to the substantial loss of what he refers to as the “*tawhidic* epistemology”. To help overcome this crisis, he advocates a renewal (*tajdīd*) of this worldview in the light of contemporary human thought. He recommends, among many other valuable things, that

- more studies be done on the epistemological dimension of the *ummah*’s knowledge-crisis in modern times and the implications of this crisis for the *ummah*’s identity with the view of securing a better comparative understanding of Islamic and modern Western knowledge-cultures;
- an *ummatic* agenda on the rediscovery and recovery of Islam’s *tawhidic* epistemology be concertedly pursued by Muslim scholars and research centres, particularly in the universities;

- academic policy makers for higher education in Muslim communities pay serious attention to the issue of application of *tawhidic* epistemology in contemporary Muslim education at all levels of learning, particularly through curriculum reforms.

In his “In Search of ‘Islamic Lifestyle’” IAIS Principal Research Fellow **Karim D. Crow** argues that the question of what constitutes an Islamic way of life today demands a more thoughtful response in light of growing material affluence of the middle class in many Muslim societies. He suggests that

- Muslims and their leaders carefully appraise and reflect upon consumption patterns in their society, in order to understand potential benefits, risks, and harms unfolding in their midst;
- that they consciously awaken a living concern with Islamic resources when responding to the pressures of consumption and increased affluence;
- and they design procedures and methods which may nurture more restrained and self-critical lifestyle choices within the prevailing consumerist environment.

“Understanding the Causes of the Debt-Crisis: Interest-Based Financing” is by IAIS Assistant Research Fellow **Abdul Karim Abdullah (Leslie Terebessy)** and looks at *ribā* (interest)-based financing from the perspective of efficiency, within the context of Islam. He makes several suggestions as to how to approach certain issues and problems, such as:

- It would be time to phase out interest-based financing, for example by permitting businesses to sell their products directly to consumers on a deferred basis;
- It is necessary to enable consumers to purchase items on an instalment basis, while ensuring that the credit price is the same as the spot price in order to avoid *ribā*;
- Finally, he favours promoting microfinance with incentives, such as tax advantages.

“Views of Science and their Implications for Muslim Higher Education” is by former IAIS Principal Research Fellow **Eric Winkel**. His contribution challenges the story of modernity as inevitable, irreversible, and teleological by demonstrating the integrity of sciences and technologies. He argues that

- European science with its technological success has to be placed within an overarching context anchored in the two worlds of the Qur’ān: our

consciousness of physical existence and corporeal phenomena, and the immaterial unquantifiable dimension of human experience.

- Moreover, he suggests that perhaps a re-reading of qur'ānic passages through the lens of great Islamic exponents will help expand the minds and hearts of students in the laboratory and classroom.
- Above all, Dr Winkel suggests that that the narrative of modernity as inevitable, irreversible, and teleological needs to be challenged by demonstrating the integrity of sciences and technologies.

The last article in this issue, “The Value of Islamic Tourism: Perspectives from the Turkish Experience,” is by **Teoman Duman**, the Deputy Rector for International Relations at the International Burch University, Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aims of this article are twofold. One is to propose a framework to better understand the term Islamic Tourism and *value* in what it offers. The author’s second aim is to provide an overview of the *ḥalāl* tourism market in Turkey. He proposes

- a definition that takes Islamically acceptable motivations as the reference point and
- to use the term *ḥalāl* to describe the economy and the sector where *ḥalāl* goods and services are offered to the markets and
- closes by stating that Islam and tourism are multidisciplinary areas. Therefore, a joint effort is needed to deepen the discussion on Islam and tourism.

This issue features four **viewpoints**:

“Afghanistan’s Peace Talks Stalling for Lack of Initiative” by myself deals with the current situation in Afghanistan and argues that confidence-building measures are needed now to put fresh impetus in the stalling peace talks, and that a clear change of policy on this will be seen as such as a confidence-building measure and will help in planning a sustainable political future for Afghanistan.

“The Arab Spring: Malaysian Responses” by **Osman Bakar** addresses the great interest among Malaysians in the Arab Spring phenomenon because it came to many of them as something unexpected and extraordinary. He argues that it would be necessary to explore ways in which the Muslim intellectual heritage may be of help to the post-revolution leaderships of the three countries in addressing issues of constitutionalism, governance, and legal systems that are now demanding their attention.

“Dialogue between the German Government and Muslims Living in Germany: Prospects and Challenges for the ‘Deutsche Islamkonferenz’ (DIK)” is by former IAIS Principal Research Fellow and Associate Editor of this journal, **Christoph Marcinkowski**. He provides vital information on the current state of affairs in terms of dialogue and cooperation between the German state and Muslim organisations and associations in contemporary Germany, currently the living-place of several millions of Muslims. He suggests that Muslims living in Germany should see themselves as part of German society and should also be understood as such by the non-Muslim German majority, and that what would also be helpful would be the setting up a clearance office at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in order to establish contacts and good examples in the cooperation of Muslims and Germany’s security authorities.

The last viewpoint, “Asset-Based vs Asset-Backed *Ṣukūk*,” is by **Abdul Karim Abdullah (Leslie Terebessy)** and addresses again, as by that writer in the past, multi-faceted issues and problems surrounding the world of *ṣukūk*, Islamic certificates of investment.

This issue also contains the **full text of a speech by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Muhyiddin Yassin** at the Global Movement of Moderates Conference (Kuala Lumpur, 19 January 2012), **7 event reports**, and **3 book reviews**.

As always, I would like to thank my IAIS colleagues, especially the Publications Department for their hard work.

Before closing, however, I would like to thank former IAIS Principal Research Fellows Drs Christoph Marcinkowski and Eric Winkel for their manifold contributions to IAIS during their term of service. Dr Winkel has returned to his home country, the United States, whereas Dr Marcinkowski – who had also been the Associate Editor of this journal since its very beginnings in 2008 – has accepted a new position back home, in Germany’s capital city Berlin. I would like to wish both of them all the best at their new positions.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali
Editor-in-Chief