

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Islam and Civilisational Renewal* contains **six articles**:

My own article “Classical and Contemporary Approaches to Education: An Islamic Perspective”, treats the underlying ethico-religious postulates and value structure on which it is founded. I explore Institutional developments and emergence of learning centres in mosque and *madrasah*, *maktab*, and *jāmi‘ah* and address the question whether education is a basic right of every individual Muslim, indeed of all citizens. Other themes addressed are methods of learning that characterise Islamic education, and the ‘*ulamā*’ expositions on classification of sciences. Modern developments, encounters with the West and between Islamic rationality and science, as well as some of the responses that have been given to these challenges are explored. The article ends with a review of the international conference of Makkah 1977 and three similar events that followed and their recommendations for an Islamic educational agenda.

“Education Toward Values” is by **Sobhi Rayan**, a Palestinian scholar who until recently was a Visiting Fellow at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University in the United States. His article deals with “different value systems from the perspective of their source, nature, and implementation, and with the link between education and values”. He argues that

- education toward values would be required, especially in our present globalised world, because communication and relationships among people have become all-encompassing;
- in this regard, the Islamic concept of morality could make valuable contributions toward the establishment of global ethics.

Salam Abdallah, Assistant Professor of Management Information Systems at Abu Dhabi University in the United Arab Emirates, is the author of “Thoughtful Learning: A Case Study Based on Islamic Traditions”. His contribution – based on a case study – focuses on the challenges faced by educational institutions in the Middle East, in particular those with adult students in tertiary education facilities. His study was inspired by reflection on the ‘*Ḥadīth* of Jabrā’īl’, a well-known Tradition of the Prophet, and presents *six principles* as a foundation to assist students in working more holistically. He makes a case for

- using modern communication technologies also in the classrooms of the Middle East,
- advocates to provide more *meaningful* and real-life-oriented learning approaches, and
- encourages *autonomous lifelong learning as a style of life*.

“Islam, Democracy, and the Question of Coexistence” is an article by **Shah M. Nister Jahan Kabir**, a young Bangladeshi scholar, who is currently doing his PhD at the University of Otago, New Zealand. He investigates Islamic norms and values in terms of current issues and the question whether Islam, democracy, and coexistence with other cultures can go along with each other. He comes to the conclusion that

- human rights and democracy are contested issues among Muslim and non-Muslim scholars;
- both issues, however, could be reconciled with each other, but the will is needed (in particular the will of the Muslims themselves), as all would just depend, in his view, on an *appropriate* interpretation of Islamic law (in line with the requirements of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, the ‘objectives of Islamic law’, I am tempted to add).

“Islam, Democracy, and the Road to Moderation: Testing the Political Commitment of Indonesian Muslim Activists” has been written by **Jamhari Makruf**, who is the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, State Islamic University (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah) in Indonesia’s capital Jakarta. His work looks into the emergence of what has been termed ‘radical Islamist’ movements in Indonesia. Among his findings are that

- *moderation* has become a ‘must’ in the current activities of those political parties which claim Islam as their basis as otherwise they would be lacking the support of the wider Indonesian Muslim public;
- there might be some sort of revival of ‘Islamist’ groups in Indonesia in the future, but this will not happen unless those parties and movements moderate and adjust their ideological platforms to the facts on the ground and the realities of Indonesian society at large.

Finally, “Navigating a Fractal World: Ibn al-‘Arabī, Civilisational Renewal, and the New Sciences” is by IAIS Principal Research Fellow **Eric Winkel**. It is an attempt to activate a language that has been dormant in Muslim societies which will speak to and with the ‘new sciences’. Still lagging behind, Muslim societies are poorly prepared to participate in the emergence of those sciences. These ‘new sciences’ have not ‘found’ God. What they have found, however, is nonlinearity, strangeness, and interconnection. He summarises his ideas by stating that

- truly understood ‘religion’ – Islam in particular – does give space to innovation, change, and progress, rather than being an obstacle to them;
- what is required is a somewhat more *universal* approach to Islam, one that includes what is “both seen and unseen”, as Dr Winkel has it, an approach which is relevant to real needs of the Muslims, the grave concerns of globalisation, pluralism, and the environment, to name only a few issues that are at stake – in short an Islamic approach which is encompassing life holistically, an Islam which is based on civilisational renewal and the *higher* goals of the *sharī‘ah*.

This time, our journal features **five viewpoints**:

“The ‘Common Good’ and Malaysia’s Education System” is by **Zarina Nalla**, who is a Consultant with IAIS Malaysia. She recommends that Malaysian policy-makers in close cooperation with civil society, parents, the private sector, and other stakeholders, find suitable compromises that address the ethnic divide by addressing deficiencies in the educational sector.

“Post-secular Piety: Interfaith Prospects and Promises” by IAIS Researcher **Tengku Ahmad Hazri** examines the prospects of interfaith engagement as a way of invigorating knowledge tradition to secure the middle-path in the context of post-secular religiosity.

“Balance, Moderation, and the ‘Middle Path’: Toward Trust between Muslims and Theravada Buddhists in Southern Thailand” is by IAIS Principal Research Fellow and Co-Chair of Publications **Christoph Marcinkowski**. His viewpoint is looking at strategies leading toward conflict-resolution in the troubled Muslim-dominated deep South of Thailand that would involve a *meaningful* dialogue between *truly* religious people on both sides of the fence.

IAIS Assistant Research Fellow **Abdul Karim Abdullah** (Leslie Terebessy) has contributed “Benefits of Risk-Sharing in the Structuring of *ṣukūk*” which investigates *ṣukūk*, the Islamic equivalent of bonds. He recommends the utilisation of *genuine* risk-sharing vehicles such as *mushārah* and *muḍārah* whereby issuers may initially raise less money but at the same time raised funds will be used more efficiently.

My own viewpoint, “Islam’s Views on Sorcery and Black Magic”, tries to make the point that sorcery is linked to superstition and ignorance and that superstition

begins to take hold and fill the space of true religiosity when religion and science fail to respond to the people's needs.

In addition, we carry this time **seven book reviews, one rejoinder, and three event reports.**

In closing, I would like to thank all of our contributors, and in particular the IAIS Malaysia editorial committee and publications department, for meeting demanding deadlines.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali
Editor-in-Chief