

reasoning, renewal, and reform, particularly in areas such as public law and Islamic criminal law. He also mentioned that there is a deep dissonance between Islamic law and social realities, in the sense that contemporary jurists and scholars have found it difficult to strike a balance between textual provisions and what is happening at hand. Ultimately, the hallmark of the book, as argued by the Minister, is its attempt to bridge text (*nass*) and context (*waqi'*) by resorting to *ijtihad* and cardinal Islamic tenets such as justice (*al-'adlu*). The officiating ceremony was followed by an interesting talk with the author, followed by a lively question and answer session.

**Malaysia-Japan Intellectual Exchange: “Japanese Value-driven Culture and Islamicate Universal Culture: A New Dimension of Intellectual-Spiritual Discourse Amidst the Global Crises”  
(IAIS Malaysia, 20 February 2020)**

*Wan Naim Wan Mansor*

This public talk was jointly organised by IAIS Malaysia, the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur, and Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) as part of the IAIS Talk Series committed to promoting Islamic research on topics concerning civilisational renewal. The invited speaker was Dr Makoto Sawai, a young Japanese scholar from the Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religions, Tenri University, Japan. As a native of Japan and scholar of Islamic studies, Dr Sawai was in a unique position to compare cosmopolitan Islamic culture, derived from rich textual ideals about human life, with value-driven Japanese culture with its strong emphasis on ethics and self-discipline. Due to the one-hour time format, the inter-civilisational discourse was narrowed down to the topic of life and death, and divided into three parts: an introduction to how the Japanese traditionally view life and death; a reading of texts by Abu Ja'far al-Tabari related to the topic; and, finally, the various modern views about life and death. The event began with an introduction by IAIS founding CEO, Prof Mohammad Hashim Kamali, and was moderated by Deputy CEO, Assoc Prof Dr Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil. An estimated 40 people attended the talk, with the audience consisting of a mixture of post-graduate students, academicians, representatives from the business sector, and the general public. The question and answer session was lively, seeing a well-established businessman share his personal anecdotes about Japanese culture and his many experiences sponsoring and fostering students from various parts of the world.