

EDITORIAL

It brings me great pleasure to present the reader with this June 2021 issue of IAIS Malaysia's flagship journal, *Islam and Civilisational Renewal*. This issue contains seven substantive articles (all with actionable policy recommendations), four viewpoints, and twelve significant event reports.

Our lead article, 'The Concept of *Wasatiyyah* in Consumption: An Analysis from Islamic Financial Jurisprudence,' is by Hossain Biplob and Md. Faruk Abdullah (both of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia). An attempt to reconceptualise the morality of consumption in Islamic terms, this article advocates restructuring individual economic behaviour around the concept of *wasatiyyah* (moderation). The authors recommend that moderation be: 1) incorporated into Islamic financial education programmes; 2) enforced within Muslim societies via stringent rules and regulations curbing extravagant consumer behaviour; 3) promoted by Islamic religious authorities; and 4) used to inform new government policies and private sector initiatives aimed at regulating consumer behaviour.

'The Politicisation of Islam in Malaysia and Its Opponents,' constitutes our second article. Written by Alexander Wain (IAIS), it presents biographical sketches of four prominent critics of politicised Islam in Malaysia, namely: Chandra Muzaffar, Zainah Anwar, Marina Mahathir, and Siti Kasim. While a plethora of scholars have written about the advocates of politicised Islam, whether in Malaysia or elsewhere, comparatively few have considered those who oppose it. Alexander attempts to rectify this deficiency, profiling four individuals with demonstrably similar Western-orientated backgrounds, levels of dedication to multiculturalism, and preoccupation with human rights. Alexander expresses doubt, however, about whether his four subjects can maintain long-term political relevance without pivoting towards a more Malay-centric vision.

Our third article, 'Said Nursi on Secularism, Religious Rights, Ethics, and Education,' is by Elmira Akhmetova (International Islamic University of Malaysia). An overview of Said Nursi's influential melding of Islam with the principles of modern secular society, this article advocates maintaining religion as the contemporary

foundation of collective and individual morality, while also highlighting how it can help manage diversity and conflict. The article recommends that: 1) collective and individual morality in Muslim societies be based on Islamic values and principles; 2) new ethical interpretations of Islam be developed to maintain the latter's contemporary moral relevance; 3) religion and science be taught side-by-side; and 4) education be re-focused on morality in order to emphasise happiness and contentment as core societal goals.

In 1958, British economist A.W. Philips published his famous trade-off theory, linking increased employment to high inflation rates. In our fourth article, 'The Role of *Zakat* in Overcoming Inflation and Unemployment: Revisiting the Trade-off Theory,' Mohammad Syafii Antonio (Institut Tazkia, Indonesia), Mohammad Mahbubi Ali (IAIS), and Jebel Firdaus (Institut Tazkia) challenge this well-established doctrine, arguing that Philips' trade-off theory can be overcome via full implementation of *zakat*. Given *zakat* can be distributed in both consumptive and productive forms, the authors argue it could help balance aggregate demand with aggregate supply, ensuring prices remain stable despite fluctuations in employment. To help realise this potential, the authors conclude that *zakat* should be: 1) managed by the state; 2) made obligatory; 3) administered by qualified, professional, and accountable individuals; and 4) used for productive purposes and job creation.

Our fifth article, 'Why the "One-Size-Fits-All" Subsidy Structure of Tabung Haji No Longer Works and How to Move Forward,' is by Nur Hasnida Abdul Rahman (IIUM) and Mohd Zaidi Md Zabri (Universiti Malaya). Originally founded to facilitate travel to Mecca, the government-linked investment company Tabung Haji has recently fallen victim to financial scandal, placing it under increasing pressure. With serious questions hanging over its long-term viability, Nur Hasnida and Mohd Zaidi suggest underpinning it with a new, more sustainable subsidy structure. Noting the need for greater transparency and pragmatism, the authors recommend that: 1) institutional reforms at Tabung Haji be accompanied by greater financial literacy among investors so that the realities of future investment (lower *hibah* payments and subsidies) be fully understood; and 2) new shariah rulings be introduced to support Tabung Haji's subsidy structure, notably by addressing Muslim perceptions about the necessity of performing *hajj*.

Our final two articles address issues surrounding Muslim minorities. In 'Multiculturalism, Muslims, and Citizenship: A Theoretical Debate,' Qurat ul Aein Fozia (University of Kashmir, India) contrasts liberal and multicultural forms of equality, relating both to the question of Muslim citizenship in non-Muslim Western democracies. Focusing on the tension that exists between preserving Muslim diasporic identities and facilitating integration, the author recommends that: 1) Western political actors recognise multiculturalism as a challenge to (not cause of) racism; 2) Western governments prioritise minority rights; 3) European Muslims be

allowed greater public visibility; 4) individual identities be cherished; 5) terrorism be causatively decoupled from multiculturalism; 6) a “double concept of equality” be adopted in Europe, making law and faith concomitant; and 7) there be greater institutional accommodation of Muslims in European countries.

Our final article, ‘The Contextualisation of Islam in a Secular State: A Study of Singapore,’ sees Muhammad Haniff Hassan (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore) and Walid Jumblatt Abdullah (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) grapple with how the social, political, and religious setting of modern-day Singapore contextualises local Islamic jurisprudential rulings. They conclude that such contextualisation will only prove successful if religious authorities allow the entirety of local Muslim opinion to inform it.

In addition to our substantive articles, we also carry four insightful viewpoints: ‘The Four Pillars of Halal Crisis Management,’ by Marco Tieman (Universiti Malaysia Pahang); ‘The US-Taliban Agreement,’ by Abdul Qayum Mohmand (Independent Researcher, USA); ‘The Potential for Shariah Arbitration in Commercial and Private Law,’ by Aisha Mubarak (of Aisha Mubarak and Co., Advocates and Solicitors); and ‘Individual Responsibility and Recovering Nature in a Post-Pandemic World,’ by Shahino Mah Abdullah (IAIS).

Our twelve significant event reports pertain to activities hosted mainly by IAIS Malaysia and appear in chronological order. While a few of these were held in person, most were conducted as webinars and managed to attract significant—in some cases, exceptionally large—participation from all over the world.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all our contributors. Collectively, they have produced an outstanding body of thought-provoking work. I am confident policymakers, scholars, and other interested parties will find their contributions both enlightening and useful.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali
Editor-in-Chief