

EDITORIAL

This latest issue of IAIS Malaysia's flagship journal, *Islam and Civilisational Renewal* (ICR), contains six substantive articles, all with actionable policy recommendations, in addition to five viewpoints and eight significant event reports and speeches. I am confident that our readers will benefit from this expert body of work, characterised by honest scholarship, depth of learning and originality of thought.

Our lead article, written by myself, is entitled 'Principles and Philosophy of Punishment in Islamic Law, with Special Reference to Malaysia.' An exploration of conventional *fiqhi* approaches to *hudud*, it argues that, while the Qur'an makes the implementation of *hudud* conditional on a consideration of repentance and reform in offenders, *fiqhi* expositions ignore these principles. I recommend that: 1) a more holistic reading of the Qur'an be developed, advancing a fresh understanding of *hudud* leading to fundamental reform; 2) ulama, politicians and other interested parties show the moral courage and initiative necessary to implement reform, preferably through new legislation; and 3) existing court procedures be revised to allow space for consideration of the surrounding circumstances of a case, including the conditions of the offender and the possibility of repentance.

Our second article, 'Islamic Perspectives on Curbing Population Growth to Promote Earth's Sustainability,' is by Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor (Visiting Fellow, IAIS). Addressing the pressing issue of overpopulation, including its negative implications for societal well-being and environmental sustainability, Batchelor recommends that: 1) Muslims do more to promote the Islamic norms of birth-spacing intervals and contraception; 2) Muslim governments provide either free or subsidised family planning services (including contraceptives); 3) *Mujtahids* strengthen rulings promoting family planning; and 4) further research be conducted into the impact of low fertility rates on societal stability.

Co-authors Amana Raquib and Imran Khan (both of the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi) contribute our third article, 'Entrepreneurship as an Agent for Social-Ethical Reform: An Islamic Perspective.' Drawing attention to the excessive levels of consumption found throughout modern society, Raquib and Khan implicate Muslim business interests in the development and perpetuation of this problem, despite the conflict it creates with core Islamic values. They recommend

that Muslim business leaders re-acquaint themselves with Islamic teachings, to transform themselves into agents of social, ethical and spiritual reform.

‘Islam in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan: Experiencing the Public Revival of Islam through Institutionalisation,’ is our fourth article, written by Bilal Ahmad Malik (University of Kashmir, India). Drawing upon long-standing debates surrounding the social functionality of Islamic revivalism, Bilal re-examines the current public role of Islam in Kazakhstan. Arguing that Islam has become institutionalised in the country, Bilal recommends that: 1) the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism in Kazakhstan be recognised as real and multi-faceted; 2) the Kazakh state mobilise indigenous Islamic traditions in its quest for social consolidation, inter-ethnic and inter-religious stability, and nation building; 3) the Kazakh government cease to divide Islamic groups into “official” and “non-official” camps, a policy which only serves to alienate “non-official” groups, stifling public debate; and 4) the Kazakh government revisit its restrictive, anti-religion legislative agenda which, in its current form, encourages radicalisation.

Our fifth article, ‘Will Arabic Survive in Australia? Participation and Challenges,’ is by Nadia Selim (University of South Australia). Lamenting the steep decline in Arabic language learning across Australia, Selim identifies several broad issues driving this development. She recommends that: 1) studies be undertaken of various learning contexts, cohorts of learners, and school-aged students who choose not to learn Arabic; 2) researchers and practitioners assess the impact negative Muslim stereotypes have upon the broader base of Australian learners; 3) researchers investigate how ethnic definitions impact upon curricular design, pedagogical equity and inclusion; 4) more attention be paid to the complications of diglossia, both amongst Arab and non-Arab learners; 5) research be undertaken into the effectiveness of the pedagogical approaches and resources used to teach Arabic; and 6) researchers do more to solicit the perspectives of non-Arab learners of Arabic.

Our final article, ‘The Importance of Islamic Financial Literacy for Muslims: A General Review,’ is co-authored by Hossain Biplob and Md. Faruk Abdullah (both of the University of Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia). Arguing that Islamic financial literacy is essential for the promotion of individual and societal well-being, the paper recommends that: 1) more in-depth research be done into how to develop Islamic financial literacy; 2) curricula and textbooks be developed to promote Muslim financial skills; 3) Muslim governments actively promote Islamic financial education; and 4) Islamic financial institutions actively encourage Muslims to adopt Islamic financial guidance while making financial decisions.

In addition to our substantive articles, we also carry five insightful viewpoints: ‘Rukun Negara as the Preamble to the Federal Constitution’ by Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil (IAIS); ‘Southeast Asia’s Forgotten Female Muslim Rulers’ by Alexander Wain (IAIS); ‘Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Its Associated Ethical

Issues’ by Shahino Mah Abdullah (IAIS); ‘Creative Destruction of Halal Certification (Bodies) by Blockchain Technology?’ by Marco Tieman (HELP University, Malaysia) and Geoffrey Williams (HELP University, Malaysia); and ‘Tabung Haji: Public Concern and Future Direction’ by Mohammad Mahbubi Ali (IAIS) and Nur Amalina Abdul Ghani (University of Bolton, UK).

Finally, let me extend my heart-felt appreciation to all our authors. Their well-informed and enlightened contributions will, I feel sure, be of interest to scholars worldwide.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali
Editor-in-Chief