

EDITORIAL

This latest issue of IAIS Malaysia's flagship journal, Islam and Civilisational Renewal (ICR), contains seven substantive articles, all with actionable policy recommendations, in addition to three viewpoints, eleven significant event reports and speeches, and a book review. 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 is by Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor (Visiting Fellow, IAIS). Entitled 'Islamic Perspectives on Reducing Meat Consumption to Promote Earth's Sustainability,' it presents an Islam-orientated exploration of the debate surrounding animal slaughter and environmental degradation. Outlining the negative environmental consequences of excessive meat consumption, Batchelor appeals to the fiqhi principle of reducing harm to argue that Muslims should limit their meat consumption. He recommends that: 1) Muslims consider becoming vegetarian, a lifestyle choice compatible with the example of the Prophet and his Companions, who rarely ate meat; 2) even while advocating reduced meat consumption, policymakers should remain mindful of the one-third of the world's surface that is capable only of supporting animal agriculture; 3) governments use taxation to increase meat prices as a means of encouraging environmentally-friendly dietary decisions; and 4) qualified mujtahids determine whether reduced red meat consumption can be made legally recommended (*mandub*) for Muslims, including in the context of animal sacrifice.

Our second article, 'Riba, Usury and Keynes,' is by Yasushi Suzuki (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan). After proposing two benchmarks for ascertaining the Islamic acceptability of a financial transaction (namely, shariah-compliance and *raf al-haraj*, or removal of hardship), Suzuki argues that state-driven attempts to eliminate *riba* (usury) must be accompanied by the adoption of a Keynesian Marginal Efficiency of Capital (MEC) model so as to preserve economic competitiveness. Suzuki concludes that policymakers must: 1) acknowledge that a *laissez-faire* market will not eliminate *riba*; 2) accept that the creation and maintenance of a

MEC model, on the other hand, will help realise such a prohibition; and 3) inform both Islamic banking and finance regulators of these points.

Authors Talat Zubair (Karachi), Amana Raquib (Karachi), and Junaid Qadir (Lahore), contribute our third article, 'On Combating Fake News, Misinformation, and Machine Learning Generated Fakes: Insights from the Islamic Ethical Tradition.' A discussion of recent technological innovations underlying the current global proliferation in online misinformation, this paper provides valuable Islamic insights into a very topical issue. The authors recommend that: 1) Muslims acknowledge the negative consequences of disseminating misinformation, while actively participating in initiatives intended to combat it; 2) social media users be trained to assess the credibility of what they read online; 3) Muslims demand proof of what they read online in order to prevent manipulation; 4) online content be shared only when there is sufficient information about its producer(s) and publisher(s); 5) journalists only practice responsible journalism, as shaped by an Islamic ethical framework; and 6) Muslims combat fake news with the same probability methods used to verify the authenticity and isnads of hadith.

Our fourth article, 'A Qur'anic Narrative on the Creation of the Universe in the Writings of Muslim Commentators,' is co-authored by Sabbir Hossain, Mazlan Ibrahim and Indriaty Ismail (all of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia). A critical exploration of the physical and metaphysical cosmogonies of Islam, the authors utilise a variety of Qur'anic translations and commentaries to problematise both traditional and modern approaches to this subject. The article recommends that: 1) a new integrated approach to Qur'anic cosmology be developed, incorporating both physical and metaphysical information; 2) Qur'anic cosmology be both qualitative and quantitative in nature, thereby avoiding the distortion of revelation; and 3) any attempt to establish scientific facts using the Qur'an should consider the qualitative nature of that text.

Our fifth article, 'Centralisation of Halal Matters under the Federal Government of Malaysia,' is co-contributed by Apnizan Abdullah and Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil (both of IAIS). Beginning with a description of the piecemeal, often confusing way in which halal matters are currently administered in Malaysia, the authors argue in favour of regulatory centralisation under the federal government. Justifying this innovation with reference to the commercial (that is, non-religious) nature of many halal matters, a circumstance seen as sufficient to obviate state jurisdiction, the authors recommend that: 1) the centralisation of halal matters in Malaysia be formalised under the ambit of Item 8 of List I of the Ninth Schedule of the Malaysian Federal Constitution; 2) a proposed National Halal Council Bill be created under the purview of the federal government; 3) the Malaysian Halal Council become the apex authority for all halal matters in the country; 4) any effort at centralisation be strictly coordinated so as to avoid unnecessary overlap between agencies; and 5)

the harmonisation of halal trading practices be encouraged as a means of boosting Malaysia's halal industry, both domestically and globally.

Our penultimate article, 'Religious Tolerance for Female Muslim Workers and Patients in Healthcare,' is by Salilah Saidun, Elmira Akhmetova, and Amilah Awang Abd Rahman (all of IIUM). A global overview of the access Muslim healthcare workers and their Muslim patients have to halal food, prayer facilities, and Muslim-friendly dress codes, this article finds that, while access varies widely from place to place, and often depends on a multiplicity of factors (from the institutional to personal), raising awareness and being proactive when demanding religious rights both prove crucial. The authors conclude that: 1) the religious rights of Muslim healthcare workers and their Muslim patients be safeguarded by the state; 2) national education systems, in combination with local religious communities, foster religious and racial tolerance; 3) in Muslim minority settings, the media must raise public awareness of Islamic religious needs; 4) healthcare institutions in non-Muslim countries must train their employees to serve culturally diverse populations; and 5) healthcare providers, in collaboration with Muslim stakeholders, allocate sufficient materials, financial support, and human resources to ensure Muslim religious needs are met.

Our final article, 'A Model for Reconciling Islamic Teachings with the Intellectual and Scientific Achievements of Modernity,' is by Javad Fakhkhar Toosi (University of Malaya). Via the creation of a 'moderate Islamic modernism', the author seeks to craft a framework for reconciling Islam with modernity. He recommends that: 1) any Islamic approach to modernity separate the latter's constituent elements into two groups: definitive intellectual (scientific) achievements and conditional Western cultural achievements; 2) the proposed model be compared to the ideas of previous modernist Muslims; and 3) more examples of the shortcomings of traditional Islamic modernism be highlighted.

In addition to our substantive articles, we also carry three insightful viewpoints: 'Haj is no longer the same Experience as in Earlier Times,' by myself; 'Branding Halal: A Delicate Balance,' also by Marco Tieman (HELP University, Malaysia); and 'Child Protection and Corporate Zakat: Constructing a Model,' by Mohammad Mahbubi Ali (IAIS). We are also pleased to carry a review of M. A. Muqtedar Khan's *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, contributed by Showkat Ahmad Dar (Government Degree College of Pulwama, India).

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