

EDITORIAL

It brings me great pleasure to present the reader with this latest, January 2017 issue of IAIS's flagship journal, *Islam and Civilisational Renewal*. In this edition of the *ICR*, we are pleased to carry six substantive articles (including the journal's first Arabic-language contribution), five viewpoints, three event reports and a book review. With some sadness, we also include the obituary of a leading Muslim scholar.

Our first substantive article, written by myself, is a focus piece entitled 'Terrorism, Banditry and *Hirabah*: Advancing New Shari'ah Perspectives.' While seeking to elucidate the Shari'ah concept of *hirabah* (an approximate equivalent for terrorism), the article discusses that term's limitations within the context of modern realities. I then suggest that, by reconnecting the *fiqh* of *hirabah* to its Qur'anic origins, these inadequacies can be overcome. I conclude with a set of actionable policy recommendations: 1) combating global terrorism requires collective action; 2) Islam forbids terrorism in all its forms, and regardless of the gender, race and religion of its perpetrators; 3) the ulama, in addition to mosque and community leaders, should make the rejection of terrorism a priority; 4) Muslim government leaders should work with community leaders, religious institutions, education centres and the media in order to create anti-extremist currents of opinion; 5) Muslim countries should take control of their own affairs and not expect foreign parties to resolve their disputes; 6) Muslims should strengthen and elevate the status of women, enlisting their support in the cause of peace; 7) states and security forces should avoid reacting to violence with greater violence; and 8) Muslim countries should base their relations with the outside world on positive foundations, particularly the principle of constructive cooperation.

Our second substantive article is entitled 'Religion as a Determinant of Child Welfare in Custody Cases in Malaysia and Classical Islamic Law: A Comparative Overview.' Co-authored by IAIS Deputy CEO, Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil, and Universiti Teknologi MARA Senior Lecturer, Rafeah Saidon, it provides us with an enlightening and timely examination of the role religion should play in determining child welfare during custodial disputes arising from the conversion of one spouse to a different religion. Focusing specifically on Malaysia's multicultural environment, the authors' discussion culminates with the following recommendations: 1) Malaysian authorities should take a moderate approach to the resolution of custody issues; 2) although Islam recognises religion as a significant determinant of child welfare, Malaysia's multiracial environment necessitates a different approach in the context of mixed marriages; 3) nevertheless, consideration should be given to how Islamic jurisprudence has traditionally resolved custodial conflict, particularly when a parent

converts to another religion; and 4) religion should not determine the custody of a child at the expense of issues surrounding welfare.

Elma Berisha, of the Asian Institute of Finance, provides us with our third substantive article, entitled 'The Qur'anic Semio-Ethics of Nature.' In it, Elma peers beyond the standard Western interpretations of the signs and symbols associated with nature, choosing instead to adopt a Qur'anic lens. Elma suggests that the notion of 'sign' constitutes a potential epistemological bridge between nature and culture, or between internal phenomenological realities and the external world. On that basis, she concludes that: 1) signs both represent and construct reality, and must therefore be separated from the false dichotomies imposed by Western thinking. This can be done by creating a connection to the Qur'anic doctrine of thinking through signs; 2) this new discipline should be used to unearth the semiotic treasures hidden in Islamic literature; 3) the new discipline should also be used to shed light on the possible influence Qur'anic discourse has had on the development of Western semiotics, particularly during the Renaissance; and 4) there should be an establishment and promotion of authentically Islamic semiotic methodologies and tools.

'Islamic Liberation Theology: Qur'anic Hermeneutics for the Challenges of the Modern Age,' is the title of our fourth article, contributed by Kaloi Abdul Rehman of the University of Sindh, Pakistan. In it, Kaloi discusses Islamic liberation theology from its sociological, ontological, epistemological and axiological perspectives, before then linking the substance of his article to the Islamisation of knowledge. He concludes by recommending that: 1) to create liberation from poverty, injustice and inequality, theology must maintain its contemporary relevance; 2) Muslim rulers and religious leaders should avoid the intoxicating effects of power in order to better serve the people and bring about peace and justice; 3) the teachings of the Qur'an, coupled with a religio-cultural understanding of Islam as a civilisational project, must play a central role in the creation of societal harmony and religious coexistence; and 4) stripping academic culture of its Western influences must form an integral part of Islam's contemporary epistemological liberation.

For our fifth article, 'The Tyranny of the Majority and its Remedies: An Islamic Overview,' IAIS Research Analyst, Wan Naim Wan Mansor, and IAIS Research Fellow, Ahmad Badri Abdullah, chart the political discourse surrounding the controversial topic commonly termed the 'tyranny of the majority.' Beginning with the Western conception of this term, Wan Naim and Ahmad Badri proceed to enrich the discussion via consideration of Islamic political thought, particularly concerning majority-minority relations. They conclude that Islam's complex understanding of pluralism can add substantially to our understanding of how majority and minority interests can be effectively balanced. Rounding off their article are the following recommendations: 1) policy-making decisions must consider the substantive principles of 'majority rule, minority rights'; 2) the 'tyranny of the majority' debate

will enable Muslims to create an informed and balanced Islamic solution to the problem of plurality; 3) Muslims must position their outlook on majority-minority relations within the context of contemporary realities, not classical precedents devoid of contextual awareness; 4) Islamic-based governance should include sufficient checks and balances to ensure the prevention of structural tyranny towards minorities; and 5) the Islamic ratio-legal apparatus should not entail absolute majoritarian rule; a more balanced and tolerant approach should be adopted in line with the wealth of Islamic evidence affirming equality.

Our final substantive article is the ICR's first Arabic-language contribution, *تنسيق المقاصد الشرعية والمناهج الفكرية وتقريبها نحو الانفتاح الحضارى*. Written by Abdul Mu'ti Dabrani of the State Islamic University of Makassar, Indonesia, and Mohammad Mahbubi Ali, a Research Fellow at IAIS, it presents an historical overview of the relationships between Sunni Islam's different law schools. The article emphasises that these schools have traditionally maintained a good degree of harmony between themselves, despite harbouring diverging (and sometimes even conflicting) views. This harmony, the article suggests, stemmed from a common goal: to achieve the higher purposes of the Shari'ah (*maqasid al-shari'ah*). This can act as a lesson for today.

Turning to our five viewpoints, the first is by Yasushi Suzuki, Professor of Economics at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan, and a recent Visiting Fellow at IAIS. Entitled '*Mottainai* Ethics and the Sustainability of Our World,' this informative piece discusses the Japanese ethical concept of *mottainai* (meaning "a sense of regret concerning waste when the intrinsic value of an object or resource is not properly utilised"). Yasushi argues that this concept embodies the virtues of modesty and self-realisation, encouraging consumers to buy only what they need and to utilise those objects for as long as possible. Wider adoption of this attitude, he says, will help create a more sustainable world.

Our second viewpoint, 'Halal Reputation Management: Combining Individual and Collective Reputation Management Strategies,' is by Marco Tieman, an Adjunct Professor at Universiti Malaysia Pahang and CEO of LBB International. Marco argues that companies dealing in halal products must prioritise their halal reputations (seen as a degree of trustworthiness) as a key performance indicator of their business. Moreover, in order to be effective, their halal reputations must not be based solely on compliance to certification requirements, but on proactive management strategies.

For our third viewpoint, IAIS Research Fellow, Tengku Ahmad Hazri, provides us with 'Resurgent Tides of Nationalism.' The recent rise of far right nationalistic movements across the Western world has turned many intellectuals against nationalism; Hazri, however, contends that, in post-colonial societies like Malaysia, this concept still has a positive role to play, particularly as a tool for transcending ethnic, religious and cultural boundaries. This should not be forgotten, Hazri argues, especially in the context of the conflicts engulfing groups like the Rohingya of Myanmar.

IAIS Research Fellow, Shahino Mah Abdullah, provides us with our fourth viewpoint, entitled ‘Solar Energy can Improve Well-being.’ In it, Shahino proposes solar energy as a key part of Malaysia’s solution to environmental degradation. While noting that most environmental damage is caused by our energy needs, Shahino argues that solar energy, as a clean and renewable form of power, could help rectify this problem. He therefore hopes that the many government initiatives currently in place to encourage solar energy will be both retained and expanded.

Our final viewpoint is by IAIS Research Fellow, Muhammad Adha Shaleh. Entitled ‘Community Engagement in Forest Care: What it Means to the People in the Forest,’ Adha engages with the issue of forest conservation, highlighting how this process will fail unless the communities which reside within the forests are included as stakeholders. Local community engagement, he argues, is essential for forest conservation, helping to build trust, goodwill and revive local knowledge for a holistic approach to the issues at hand.

Turning to our significant event reports, these begin with the inaugural ‘International Conference on Islam and Contemporary Issues in the Muslim World: Challenges and the Way Forward.’ Held on 5-6 December 2016 and co-organised by IAIS, APIUM, the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) and the Academy of Islamic Studies Alumni Association (ALIM), this event drew many distinguished speakers. It focused on how Islam can answer the problems facing Muslims in the modern world, including poverty and corruption.

Our second significant event is the ‘International Seminar on Islam and Green Technology,’ held at IAIS on 16 November 2016. Co-organised by IAIS, the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM), APIUM, ATSA Architects, and Malaysian Environmental NGOs (MENGO), this well-attended and well-received event discussed various aspects of Islam and green technology, including green architecture, permaculture design and classical agricultural innovation.

Our final event, held on 5-6 December 2016 is the roundtable discussion, ‘Contemporary Issues and Challenges of Zakat Management in Malaysia,’ held on the 3 November 2016 at the Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya (APIUM). Co-organised by IAIS, the Selangor Board of Zakat (LZS) and the National Secretariat of Zakat Management (SPZN), this important event highlighted the crucial role zakat plays in poverty alleviation while also stressing the difficulties associated with its collection.

In addition to our articles, viewpoints and event reports, this issue of the ICR also includes Senad Mrahorović’s review of Osman Bakar’s *Qur’anic Pictures of the Universe: The Scriptural Foundation of Islamic Cosmology*. This insightful review neatly summarises the strong contribution Prof Osman’s text makes to the field of cosmology, while also highlighting the rich scientific, philosophical and spiritual legacy of the Qur’an.

Finally, it is with profound sadness that we end this issue with the obituary of famed Egyptian scholar, Professor Dr Jamaluddin Atiyyah. Renowned throughout his field, we pray that Allah s.w.t. reward him for his efforts and embrace him in His unbounded mercy.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali
Editor-in-Chief