

EDITORIAL

This October 2016 issue of IAIS Malaysia's flagship journal, *Islam and Civilisational Renewal*, contains six substantive articles (all with actionable policy recommendations), four viewpoints, four event reports and two book reviews.

The first of our substantive articles is by Yasushi Suzuki, Professor of Economics at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan, and a recent Visiting Fellow at IAIS. Entitled 'Sufism and Suzuki Shosan's Japanese Zen Teachings,' it compares and contrasts traditional Sufi and Zen teachings; after identifying a common core to both traditions, Yasushi argues that Sufism has a 'universality' which makes it easily relatable to other faiths. If Muslims were to revive Sufism, it could therefore act as a powerful rival to the exclusivism propagated by Islamic fundamentalism.

The second of our articles is by IAIS Research Fellow, Mohammad Mahbubi Ali. Entitled '*Takaful* Models: Their Evolution and Future Direction,' it presents an important exploration of the rapidly emerging *takaful* (Islamic insurance) industry. After describing its most recent developments and limitations, Mahbubi advocates *musharakah ta'awuniyah* (cooperative partnership) as a possible future direction. This concept would reshape insurance as a contract of cooperation and shared responsibility for mutual assistance. Mahbubi acknowledges, however, the need to further examine its commercial viability and practicality.

Our third substantive article is entitled, 'Women in Islamic Civilisation: Their Rights and Contributions.' Written by Elmira Akhmetova, an Assistant Professor at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), it begins with a fascinating historical overview of the contributions Muslim women have made to science and public welfare. It then states, however, that such female empowerment is rare nowadays; contemporary Muslim women are frequently deprived of their most basic rights, effectively excluding them from these spheres of activity. In light of that, Elmira concludes her article with the following recommendations: 1) academic institutions should further investigate past instances of female Muslim involvement in the sciences; 2) contemporary Muslim governments should look to the example of the past and help promote a future role for women in the sciences; 3) gender discrimination should be prevented by the authorities; 4) the rights of women should not be neglected or interfered with; 5) Muslim religious leaders must achieve a better understanding of the role of women in Islamic society; and 6) Muslim governments should harness both the media and their countries' educational systems to actively promote the significance of women in Islam.

The fourth article in this issue of the *ICR* is by Ibrahim Imam, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Entitled 'Shariah and Human Rights Perspectives

on Interfaith Marriage: Challenges Impeding its Practice in Nigeria,' it discusses the right of Muslim women to enter into interfaith relationships. After outlining the Shariah principles regulating interfaith marriage, Ibrahim concludes that Muslim women should not marry non-Muslim men. While the Shariah accepts the idea of inter-religious marriage between Muslim men and Jewish or Christian women, the case is more problematic for Muslim women. Given the added and peculiar difficulties attached to interfaith marriage in Nigeria, he therefore recommends that Nigerian Muslim women refrain from marrying non-Muslims.

Our fifth substantive article is called 'Muslim Student Expectations from Islamic Studies Courses in Australia.' Written by Mehmet Ozalp, Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation at Charles Sturt University, Australia, and Tamana Daqiq, an executive member of the Islamic Sciences and Research Academy of Australia (ISRA), it draws on a recent survey gauging the motivations and expectations of students at the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (CISAC), Australia's first tertiary-level Islamic educational institute. While reinforcing CISAC's unique status as a provider of traditional Islamic education in a Western context, the article uses the survey to make the following recommendations for the Centre's improvement: 1) for Muslims living in the West, university-level Islamic studies courses should be designed as an exploration of Islam from within; 2) supplementary development programmes are needed for those students who wish to go further in their Islamic learning; 3) courses should creatively merge classical and contemporary content and approaches; 4) assessment design should take into account student diversity; and 5) non-Muslim students should not be ignored in the process, but rather offered their own opportunities to study Islam.

Our final article, entitled 'Environmental Sustainability: Worldview, Philosophy and Teachings,' is by Salman Ahmed Shaikh, a PhD student at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Abdul Ghafar Ismail, Professor of Islamic Banking and Financial Economics at UKM, and Muhammad Hakimi Mohd Shafiai, a Senior Lecturer at UKM. Through the prism of economics, this article explains Islam's teachings on environmental sustainability. Arguing that Islam both encourages and reinforces environmentally friendly behaviour and choices, the authors conclude that its teachings should be used to offset the currently dominant (but extremely harmful) view that humans are both the means and ends of economic growth – a perspective that has resulted in unprecedented levels of poverty and inequality.

Turning to our four insightful viewpoints, the first is my own, entitled 'Salafism, Wahhabism and Radical Islam.' In it, I describe the origins and development of the various conservative Islamic movements commonly termed 'Salafi'. Beginning with Ibn Taymiyyah's deconstructionist approach to Islam's legal tradition, I trace Salafi thought up to the advent of the twentieth century's various anti-*madhhab* movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood. I conclude that the mid- to late-twentieth-century

rise of secular nationalism benefited the expansion of these movements, altering the form of Islam's scholastic legacy.

In our second viewpoint, called “‘A Thousand Sages have but One Mind’: The Forging of a Joint Chinese-Muslim Identity,” IAIS Research Fellow Alexander Wain outlines how, over the course of several centuries, China's early Muslim community developed a respect and appreciation for Chinese culture that allowed it to foster a joint Chinese-Muslim identity. Alexander argues that modern-day Muslims should resurrect the spirit of this tolerant and accommodative attitude in order to build stronger bridges with the world's next superpower.

IAIS Deputy CEO, Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil, provides our third viewpoint, ‘Syariah Criminal Code (II) Enactment 1993 Amendment 2015: Can Kelantan Enforce *Hudud*?’ Focusing on the Kelantan State Government's recent proposals regarding *hudud*, Dr Azam argues that it will be impossible to implement those proposals without the consent of Malaysia's Federal Parliament. Moreover, the multi-racial and multi-cultural realities of Malaysia would make any such implementation impractical.

In our final viewpoint, ‘Muslims should pay more attention to Human Relations,’ former IAIS Associate Research Fellow, Daud Batchelor, argues that Muslims must revive their commitment to *mu'amalat* (civil transactions and social interactions). Daud highlights that Muslim countries tend to fare poorly in assessments of social responsibility. As a result, Muslims should cease to focus solely on outward forms of piety (like prayer and fasting) and instead concentrate on developing good dealings with their fellow humans.

Turning to our significant event reports, first we reproduce a speech delivered on 31 October by His Royal Highness, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah of Perak, at the book launch of Dato' Wong Sulong's *Being Abdullah Badawi*, the authorised biography of Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Next, we report on the ‘International Conference on Women and Children: Legal and Social Issues,’ held in Subang Jaya from the 17 to 18 October. Co-organised by Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, and IAIS, this event was well-attended by a wide range of scholars and practitioners. The conference drew on the expertise of its many members to address a diverse range of issues, including the rights of women and children in the context of the family, education, and as refugees.

Our third notable event, held on the 15 October and hosted by IAIS, was the book launch of Eric Winkel's English-language translation of Ibn Arabi's *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah*. After the official launch of the book, Dr Winkel delivered a highly-stimulating lecture elucidating Ibn Arabi's unique brand of Sufism.

Our final event saw IAIS host a forum entitled “The Coup in Turkey and the Future of Muslim Politics”. Held on the 19 August, the event was co-organised by IAIS and the International Movement for a Just World (JUST). Well-attended by a

number of interested parties, the event explored the origins and implications of the recent plot to overthrow Turkey's elected government. In particular, it focused on the plausibility of the various accusations levelled at Fethullah Gulen.

This issue of the *ICR* ends with two book reviews. The first, written by Gowhar Quadir Wani of Aligarh Muslim University, examines Mohammad Omar Farooq's *Toward our Reformation: From Legalism to Value-Oriented Islamic Law and Jurisprudence*. Gowhar expertly summarises a text calling for the end of *taqlid* (blind following) and the restructuring of Islamic law in accordance with value-orientated principles like human dignity, justice and equality.

In our second book review, Yasushi Suzuki appraises Mohd Daud Bakar's *Shariah Minds in Islamic Finance*. Yasushi argues that this text, which concerns itself with the central role of Shariah scholars in Islamic Finance, offers many insightful suggestions for the future growth of the industry.

As a final word, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all of our contributors. Together, they have produced an outstanding, thought provoking body of work. I am confident that policy makers, scholars and other interested parties, both locally and globally, will find this issue of the *ICR* both useful and enlightening.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali
Editor-in-Chief