

## Preface / Vorwort

Bülent Ucar

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Dear readers,

We are very pleased to present to you this newly designed edition of the Hikma – bearing, most notably, a new cover – and sincerely hope it will meet with your unanimous approval. This change now also visibly marks the beginning of a promising collaboration with the publishing house Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, which set off to a good start in the previous edition. In spite of these external changes, our thematic focus on topics remains unaltered and rests on displaying the manifold plurality and diversity of Islam in all its facets. This edition of the Hikma, in particular, showcases topics that are both highly topical and at the heart of some controversy, such as apostasy from Islam and religious freedom, before embarking to, in the truest sense of the word, new horizons, in dating *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, *Sūrat al-Kawṭar* und *Sūrat al-Iḥlās* and, subsequently, providing insight into fields of practice, such as establishing and imparting Islamic education in day nurseries.

In the first article, entitled “*Apostasy from Islam (irtidād) from the Point of View of Contemporary Turkish Theologians*”, Benjamin Flöhr critically examines key positions of contemporary and prominent theologians in Turkey regarding the question of apostasy from Islam, which run the gamut from traditionalist to modernist views. Even though there is mutual agreement on the understanding that in reference to verse 256 of *Sūrat al-Baqara* there should be no compulsion in religion, different views exist on whether Muslims committing apostasy from Islam should be subject to punishment and whether this will be due in this world or in the hereafter. This article demonstrates that even today prominent theologians in Turkey either still advocate the punishment for apostasy or at least do not oppose it explicitly.

In the following article, entitled “*Out of a Clear Blue Sky? – On the Difficulties of Dating Sūrat al-Fātiḥa, Sūrat al-Kawṭar and Sūrat al-Iḥlās*”, authors Omar Hamdan and Patrick Brooks attempt dating the aforementioned surahs. By doing so, they thoroughly outline the diverging datings and interpretations of scholars of classical Qur’ānic exegesis and Orientalists, who, in spite of their differences, concur in drawing a clear line between Meccan and Medinan sources of origin.

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\* Prof. Dr. Bülent Ucar, editor of the Hikma, is Professor for Islamic Studies and Religious Education at Osnabrück University, where he is also the Director of the Institute of Islamic Theology (IIT).

However, both schools of thought fail to unequivocally classify the aforementioned surahs into either context. In an attempt to overcome these ambiguities, the authors override the maxims of dating a surah chronologically and identifying a concrete, worldly occasion of revelation and allocate the surahs into the joint thematic context of the Prophet's night journey of ascension (*laylat al-mi' rāğ*), by which they determine not a worldly, but heavenly – and therefore timeless – circumstance of revelation.

In the subsequent article, entitled “*Islamic Education in Children's Day Nurseries*”, Misbah Arshad places her emphasis on the development of an adequate Islamic religious pedagogy for early childhood education, concluding that it continues to represent a desideratum of research. A representative study assessing cross-cultural and interreligious education in day nurseries throughout Germany revealed that nearly 80% of nursery-school teachers believed that cross-cultural and interreligious education and knowledge help in overcoming prejudices. However, this opinion seems diametrically opposed to the present-day situation in day nurseries, since the answers indicated that only a very low proportion of nurseries and nursery teachers actually imparted Islamic knowledge to children. These findings call for pioneering research by Institutes of Islamic Theology in Germany and abroad and extensive funding of further education and training programmes in this particular field by governmental actors.

As in earlier editions, this Hikma is supplemented by a translation, in this particular instance of the testament of Imām Faḥruddīn ar-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). In his introductory considerations to the translation, Hüseyin Uçan reflects the significance and objectives of this form of literary legacy, which seeks to relay scholars' acquired theological insights and knowledge to present-time theologians and philosophers.

As has become the tradition of the Hikma, this edition concludes with an interview, which is conducted with the President of the German Caritas Association, prelate Dr Peter Neher, the President of Diakonie Germany, Ulrich Lilie, Dr Zekeriya Altuğ, formerly Chairman of the regional DITIB association of Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein and Dr Matthias von Schwanenflügel, LL.M.Eur., Head of Directorate Demographic Transition, Elderly People, Social Welfare of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, discussing the foundation and launch of an Islamic welfare organisation in Germany. The interview addresses prospects, challenges and tasks of a prospective Islamic welfare service, which would veritably be an institutional embodiment of actively taking and shouldering social responsibility and mark the best possible form of successful integration. By redirecting the focus towards mankind, as God's best creation, an Islamic welfare organisation could help in returning to a more humane welfare service, avoiding the snares of an ever-increasing mechanisation and “technisation” of support measures. In doing so, the plurality and diversity of

Islam might prove an advantage, allowing to reach out and offer diverse means of assistance to people of manifold backgrounds.

These articles and also the interview demonstrate Islam's growing importance in present-day society in Germany and countries of the Western world, mapping the chances and challenges of Islam's encounter with the Western world and, to the same extent, of Islamic tradition with modernity and developing, in a further step, participatory ways of dialogue with each other, both mutually enriching and promising. At this point, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to all authors contributing to this Hikma and to all members of the editorial team who continue to exhibit such a high level of dedication and commitment in compiling this journal. I sincerely hope that this Hikma, as its previous editions, yields to you, our faithful readers, an ample number of invaluable and profound insights.

Osnabrück, April 2016

Bülent Ucar