

Preface / Vorwort

Editor / Herausgeber*

Dear readers,

This *Hikma*, which is compiled by the staff of the Institute of Islamic Theology, is a platform for those, who are entrusted with the teaching, research and practice of Islamic Theology and Religious Education here in Germany, in the diaspora, today, where they are facing the challenge to continuously correlate between tradition, on the one hand, to which they correspond to, and, modernity, on the other hand, with which they critically engage with. The way in which Islam is shaped by its surroundings, time and the prevailing conditions and circumstances, is a recurrent theme in this *Hikma*, and a process, in which we are embedded here, at this particular location, and actively participate in, thereby observing how these forms and shapes (here in Germany or in the Muslim countries of origin) interrelate and mutually enrich each other. This correlation is illustrated in this 11th edition of the *Hikma* in particular by practical representations and applications of Islamic belief, such as in Islamic education or in Islamic spiritual care, which has begun to establish itself in public institutions in Western Europe and whose specific traits are depicted. As the theologian Peter Graf points out in his article in the publication “*Islamic Theology and Religious Pedagogy. Islamic Education as a Means to Develop the Self*”, which is reviewed in this *Hikma*, spirituality, on which, for that matter, also spiritual care is based upon, is quite capable, in the sense of an underlying personal form of religiousness, to bridge the believers of differing religions, thus helping to mediate between their inherent differences.

The first article, entitled “*Happiness, Suffering and Theodicy in Light of the Qur’ānic Soteriology – Attempting a Practical-Theological Explanation*”, explores the question of the righteousness of God regarding the suffering, the imperfection, in this world. As the authors, Patrick Brooks and Omar Hamdan, state, the decisive dimension for an exhaustive answer to this question is necessarily tied to the promise of the life in the hereafter, since only if the premise of God’s final acts of judgements and Divine Providence is given, will the actions of humans, the good or ill deeds, in the full sense of the word, bear the righteous consequences. Unlike Christian theology, which, in the course of continuous suffering even after God’s saving work and the salvation through Jesus Christ, is falling into an aporia, Islam allocates suffering a definite function and task. In the view of Islam, the pain and suffering which occur in this world is instrumentalised by God, with the intention, as with their counterparts, happiness and joy, the bountiful blessing, to put human beings to the test, thus deciding which direction the otherworldly dimension will take. In light of this understanding, life on earth is considered to be mankind’s second chance to attain God’s blessing and to be admitted into paradise. By observing a central problem of the three monotheistic religions from an Islamic-theological perspective, the authors initiate a discussion that opens an interdisciplinary-interreligious dimension that exceeds the interior field of Islamic Theology. The interdisciplinary dialogue presented

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here might only mark a beginning; it will be of much interest, to observe how it will proceed.

In the following article, entitled “*Islamic Spiritual Care in the Netherlands. From Amateurism to Professionalism*”, Arslan Karagül first introduces the term, the contents and aims of spiritual care from a general perspective, before he turns his attention to the particular case of Islamic spiritual care in the Netherlands, which is still a rather new occurrence. In doing so, the author maps the basic and essential requirements, such as the education of present and future generations of spiritual care givers, as well as the legal situation. In the last chapter of the article, Karagül identifies the specific foundations and characteristics of Islamic spiritual care, a concept which, in this institutionalised form, as for instance at hospitals and prisons in the Western countries, was long unknown in the countries of origin as these duties and responsibilities were hitherto performed either privately by relatives or by the imams of the local mosques. In addition to this, Islamic spiritual care in the Western countries, which is influenced by and follows spiritual care practices of other religions and life philosophies, features differently, namely in dialogue form.

Diaaeldin Hassanein, the author of the third, and final, article, entitled “*How can Islamic Religious Education Benefit from the Approach Taken by Matthew Lipman? An Analysis Based on a Case of Application in Religious Education*”, considers the benefits of Lipman’s approach, which is also the basis of the latter mentioned author’s children’s book *Harry Stottlemeier’s Discovery*, for Islamic education. Since Lipman had observed that children were lacking instruments helping them to reason in a rational and analytical fashion in discussions, he developed his method of “critical thinking”, which main objective was to teach children to be mature and self-responsible thinkers and learners. The key issue is not delivering and conveying pre-assembled knowledge, but, rather, the children themselves should learn to acquire knowledge and to make it accessible to them. This is achieved by instructing the children both to formulate questions and to position themselves in a rationally comprehensible way, while, at the same time, the exchange with others proves that equally valid opinions exist. It is via the actual exchange that thought is generated. Citing references from the Qur’ān, Hassanein is able to demonstrate, that God, from an Islamic perspective, is appealing to human beings to make use of their capacity of rational thinking, the logic. Using a case of application in Religious Education, the author illustrates how it is possible to animate children to think in a critical way in a class room context.

As a piece of miscellanea, Martin Kellner, in his text entitled “*Theology, Travel and the Course of Water*”, provides (amongst other travel experiences) the first of two accounts of the Institute’s annual Summer School, which took place in Morocco. Travelling to a number of countries, Kellner finds himself confronted with most different conditions and shapes of Islam, which summon thoughts that cross the boundaries of the particular Abrahamic religions. During the event of travelling and in his encounters in the different countries, the element of water evolves as a unifying aspect. Both the state, the flow as well as the cycle of water, a passage – which also describes the act of travelling – are used as a metaphor for the status of religion, Islamic Theology (generally speaking, but also in Germany and at the Institute, in particular) and knowledge.

In the second piece of miscellanea, entitled “*Contents and Objectives of an ‘Islamic Religious Education in Early Childhood Education’*”, Iman Andrea Reimann presents the contents and participants’ results of a workshop held at the IIT. These comprise guidelines to the structure and general framework, aims as well as contents of an Islamic nursery (kindergarten).

As Jasser Abou Archid, who provides the Arabic-German translation of the excerpt from *Hal al-muslim mulzam bi-t-tibā’ maḥḥab mu’āīyan min al-maḥāhib al-‘arba’* by Muḥammad Sulṭān al-Ma’sūmī al-Ḥuḡandī al-Makkī, emphasises, this short piece of work, which is written in the style of a pamphlet, is relevant for the modern scientific discourse regarding the significance of classical schools of jurisprudence, since the position put forward by the author expresses an established Salafi position. In this excerpt, al-Ḥuḡandī, who is attached to neo-Salafi movements, repudiates the blind following in Islamic jurisprudence, claiming that only the sources of revelation, the Qur’ān and the Sunna, serve as valid legal foundations. Should the legal interpretations of the great scholars adhere to these two sources, they are to be accepted, but in every other case, they should be discarded.

Turning our attention to the key findings of recent conferences and events, Martin Jung commences by relating his impressions and experiences during this year’s Summer School in Morocco in his text “*Open People, Closed Mosques*”, where he, from a comparative view of religion, traces the imprint of Abrahamic religions on historical monuments, architecture and customs, which tell of the historical circumstances of Islam and the entwinement with the other religions. The conference *Hadith in the 21st Century* reveals the tension between classical ḥadīth science and contemporary approaches, some of which are calling for a change of paradigm in dealing with the ḥadīth corpus. The Workshop *What Does the Scientific Nature of Theology Imply?*, critically discusses the status of theologies as sciences from both a Christian and Muslim perspective. Finally, the topics and insights of the *Martin Buber Colloquium – All True Life is Encounter* are recounted, which attended to the different, yet related, subjects of interest of this acclaimed scholar and made the importance of dialogue its key focus, a principle of human perception and realisation in itself from which every kind of interreligious encounter and experience is able to benefit.

This latter field of application features again in the reviews of recent publications within the scope of the disciplines of Islamic Theology and Religious Education. Thus Stephan Leimgruber presents four exceedingly elaborate and well-informed works in the field of interreligious dialogue, two extensive dictionaries and two compendiums, which clarify basic terminology and contents but also provide hands-on working knowledge and assemble the requirements for living together peacefully. In the subsequent review, Melahat Kişi critically appraises the publication *Islamic Theology and Religious Pedagogy. Islamic Education as a Means to Develop the Self*, which adopts and examines approaches of Religious Pedagogy which either apply to religions in general or are particular to Islamic education. It is firmly established as the aim of the latter that children should be taught to be mature human beings, who are able to think, act, decide and believe in a self-responsible way. Alongside Amir Dziri’s monograph on *sīra* literature, Ruggero Vimercati Sanseverino, who provides this final review, pursues a hermeneutical question,

which is crucial to Islamic, Jewish and Christian Theology, by exploring the relationship between historicity, verity and theological claims on meaning.

This *Hikma* concludes with an interview conducted with the Muslim theologian Prof. Ingrid Mattson, who developed the first accredited graduate programme for Muslim chaplains in the USA, and whom we had the honour to welcome at the IIT in the context of a workshop on spiritual care. In this interview, Prof. Mattson touches on the reasons which contributed to the foundation of the abovementioned programme, its aims and contents, and goes on to describe future plans, such as a concept which is based on community chaplains and is oriented towards the changing needs and life conditions of human beings entailing the loosening of social ties and places in our modern world. Considering these developments and effects in regard to spiritual care, Mattson emphasises the need to reach out to human beings in order to move together with those who themselves are in motion.

Seizing a statement towards the end of this interview – which ties in with the remarks at the beginning of this Preface –, a part of the spiritual secret of Islam implies that human beings are on a journey in this world, in a process of passing through it, since, from the Islamic point of view, this life represents a transition from this world into the hereafter. While adopting differing approaches, at the heart of Islam, as the articles in this *Hikma* attempt to show, is the wish and duty to help and enable humans to reach maturity, which, amongst other ways of acquisition, is achieved by teaching to think in an independent and self-responsible manner, thus enabling humans, amongst other reasons, to persist in and pass the tests of this worldly life. Education begins in kindergarten, by educating the very youngest, and continues throughout life, for instance at the various occasions of spiritual care. One means of transmitting knowledge, tapping into and utilising it in order to acquire deeper insight, has always been, next to the form of dialogue, the written word, which has the objective to enter into a mutually beneficial dialogue with its readers. Before I conclude this preface, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all contributing authors and members of staff for their diligent and knowledgeable work ably demonstrating their expertise and proficiency in their field of work. I truly wish that you, dear readers, may encounter and unearth in this edition of the *Hikma* an abundant number of insights proving both inspiring and thought-provoking.

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