

Preface / Vorwort

Editor / Herausgeber*

Dear readers,

Each new edition of the *Hikma* sets out to capture a number of varied and novel approaches to Islamic Theology. This holds especially true for this issue - the eighth *Hikma* so far – as the five articles which contribute to the first category of this journal explore a wide breadth of topic matters concerning themselves with contemporary developments and movements arising from a position of immediacy to the Qur'an, a corporate social responsibility concept that is consistent with Shari'a laws and a scholar's perspective on *ḥādīth*-methodology as well as a study of the Divine self-conception and the use and understanding of rhetoric devices within the Qur'an.

M. Suat Mertoğlu commences by describing movements grounding themselves on the Qur'anic revelation in his article entitled “*Directly Inspired by the Qur'an': From Returning to the Qur'an to the 'Discourse of Qur'anic Islam'*”. In this investigation, he places his focus on the “Returning to the Qur'an Movement” and the “Discourse of Qur'anic Islam”, an even more marginal development of the aforementioned movement. The followers of these movements ascribe the reasons for the backwardness and disunity among Muslims to a growing distance from the Qur'an. Instead of reducing the differences of opinion between Muslims, the “Discourse of Qur'anic Islam” has, quite on the contrary, exacerbated the disagreements and disunity. The author concludes that the movement has a destructive influence on the Ummah-concept of Islam, reducing the understanding of Islam to a sum of principles that cannot be transferred to real life.

The second article of this *Hikma*, contributed by Omar Hamdan and entitled “*Aṭ-Ṭabarī and the Divine Self-Conception in the Qur'an: Rejecting Anthropomorphic Concepts of Allāh as Exemplified by the sūrat al-iḥlās*”, examines this scholar's studies (dec. 310/923), a prominent Muslim historian, on the Divine self-conception within the Qur'an and the repudiation of anthropomorphic conceptions of Allāh in his analysis of the *sūrat al-iḥlās*. The author supports Aṭ-Ṭabarī's preferred reception of this significant Surah, which is said to be equivalent to one third of the entire revelation. Central to this view is the belief that God does not possess any human qualities. This is of great importance for theological and dogmatic debates and inspires the author to engage in further reflections. The second part of this article conceives God to be above all human comparisons, a core statement of the Qur'anic revelation, as grasping the Divine Entity is not within the scope of human imagination.

The article of the following author, Souheil Thabti, is entitled “*Corporate Social Responsibility from a Shari'a Point of View*”. With an emphasis on Islamic banks, the author points to the crucial socio-economic role that financial institutions play within society and how companies compliant to Islamic law and principles bear a social, economic and environmental responsibility pertaining to all of their everyday operations, such as contracts and products. As banks take the decision to which company or project they provide financial support, these institutions are able to promote corporate social responsibility by financing only those companies operating in a socially responsible way.

The subsequent article, entitled “*Rhetorical Devices and Religious Facts on the Basis of the Ellipsis in the Qur'an*”, turns its focus to an entirely different topic by exploring the ellipsis as a rhetorical device within the Qur'an. Therein, Mahmoud Haggag includes linguistic, cognitive and theological considerations on the ellipsis, or more precisely *iğāz*, in the Qur'an. Issues such as the relation between rhetoric and Qur'an and the idea of rhetoric as a miraculous sign are discussed as

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well as the approach taken by rhetoricians and exegetes of the Qur'an as part of the Arabic-Islamic discourse.

The ultimate article in this first section of the *Hikma*, entitled “*From a Scholar’s Perspective: Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī’s Studies on ḥadīth-Methodology*”, examines the methodology applied by this influential academic to the exegesis of prophetic habits and practices, *aḥādīth*. As the author Jasser Abou Archid seeks to show, the proper reception of these reports relies on a sound methodology. He observes that al-Qaradāwī’s approach is based on the principles of classical scholars and is not of entirely innovative nature. Furthermore, al-Qaradāwī’s basic theological position, which he termed “The School of the Middle Way”, including six of his basic methodological approaches, is assessed in a more detailed way.

Proceeding to the second category of this journal, our authors provide an insight into recent conferences relating to the relevant disciplines, briefly summarising the most important conclusions of these events. Benjamin Jokisch relates the key findings of the conference *Salafism in Germany*, which was held at Osnabrück University at the beginning of March. This is followed by a report from Elif Medeni of a conference labelled *Islamic Education in the Western Context*, which took place in London, and an account by Thomas Würtz addressing the matters of *A Focus on Pakistan: Current Issues and Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Research*, which was held in Munich. Finally, Abdurrahim Kozalı and Ertan Öztürk provide a synopsis of the conference relating to *Islamic Business Law*, which took place at Osnabrück University from 24-25 January.

As in earlier issues, this *Hikma* showcases a number of noteworthy publications to a broader public, before concluding with an interview held with Mehmet Görmez, President of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), at the head office in Turkey.

Coming to the end of this preface, I would like to bring your attention to the title of this journal that you presently hold in your hands. In previous editions, the topic of Religious Education has not featured as prominently as its related discipline of Islamic Theology. However, it is the aim of this journal to provide equal space and attract the reader’s attention to both of these matters, which form the heart of the *Hikma*. Therefore, we would like to appeal to all our readers who are currently engaged in the research and/or teaching of Islamic Religious Education to forward to us articles, essays or further contributions connected to this subject matter and are deemed relevant for this journal.

This extensive 8th edition of the *Hikma* has once again benefited exceedingly from our most helpful and talented contributors. In this respect, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all authors for their diligent work as well as for cooperating with the editorial team in such a cordial and effective manner. Additionally, I extend my profound thanks to all members of the editorial team, who did a tremendous job copy-editing, proof-reading and editing all submitted work, notably Bettina Kruse-Schröder, Corinna Küster, Bacem Dziri, Jörg Ballnus, Susanne Klinger, and Hakkı Arslan.

Today, I am looking into a promising future for this relatively young journal and am hopeful that this edition as its predecessors once again bears the fruit of wisdom as the title name of this journal so aptly implies.

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Bülent Uçar