

Preface / Vorwort

Bülent Ucar*

Dear readers,

following the publication of our third special issue with a focus on Religious Education in April this year, this current edition of the *Hikma* contains contributions placing their emphasis primarily on topics drawn from the field of theology. Leading into the selection of texts examining this particular field from various angles, Mahmud El-Wereny outlines, in his article, the modern theological debate of the 20th/21st century on the normative value of the Sunna in relation to the Qur'ān. For this endeavour, the writings of a variety of contemporary authors serve him as a source of reference. Closely examining these source texts, El-Wereny determines two diametrically opposed schools of thought, namely traditionalist and modernist, that, in his opinion, shape the debate: Adherents of the first, i.e. traditionalist school of thought, acknowledge the Sunna as a source of revelation of equal validity to the Qur'ān. From their vantage point, the Sunna not only supports or further elaborates the teachings of the Qur'ān but also substantiates new provisions not contained within the Qur'ān. Scholars supporting the latter school of thought, which the author characterises as modernist, regard traditionalist approaches with scepticism and acknowledge the Sunna solely as a secondary source of Islamic law, delimiting its function to verifying and elaborating the teachings of the Qur'ān. By likening both viewpoints to another, El-Wereny seeks to trace the main lines of reasoning as well as attempting to determine the commonalities and divergences to early Islamic debates on the normative value of the Sunna.

In an effort to improve access to Islamic Education in German state schools, debates are taking place in the policy fields of social, education and integration policy and within philosophy of science to conceive workable concepts and to put in place measures to further the establishment of Islamic Education, while also attending to the different forms of religiosity of Muslims and its implications on contents and aims of Islamic Education. Taking this context into account, Turunç Sultan Tufan-Destanoğlu puts forth an empirical study she conducted as part of her doctoral thesis at the Institute of Islamic Theology of Osnabrück University. In this study, she provides insight into the intentions, interests and hopes maintained by Muslim parents and teachers of Islamic Education regarding Islamic Education. Adopting a religious-pedagogical, Islamic-theological and empirical point of view, the study deals with exploring the educational conceptions from an inner-Is-

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lamic perspective. In this regard, the findings of a study conducted among 370 Muslim parents and 81 teachers of Islamic Education regarding their expectations for Islamic Education at primary schools in Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia are presented and discussed. At the heart of the study, the question is explored whether, in spite of all differences in ethnic, religious, cultural, societal and social backgrounds and in age, sex, level of education and profession of Muslim parents and teachers of Islamic education, commonalities exist with regard to the expectations both target groups harbour for Islamic Education.

The field of classical Oriental Studies has brought forth a number of notable scholars, whose works, until today, serve as groundwork for diverse areas of Islamic scholarship. In future issues of this journal, the editorial team of the Hikma seeks to republish some of the works originating from this era of scholarship. In this current issue, part of the doctoral thesis of the Indian scholar Muhammad Hamidullah (d. 2002) is republished in the category of miscellaneous texts, a text that first appeared in the journal of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (ZDMG) in 1935. Prior to this publication, in 1933, Hamidullah earned his doctoral degree in Bonn. He was regarded as a highly acclaimed scholar in the fields of Islamic Law, Hadith Studies and Prophetic Biography. The second piece of miscellanea is provided by Vanessa Walker, who submits a slightly revised version of an essay she composed in the context of the annual week of study focussing on the topic “Christian-Islamic Relations in the European Context”, hosted by the Academy of the Diocese Rottenburg-Stuttgart. In March this year, Walker was awarded the first prize for the best essay in the essay composition run by the Georges Anawati Foundation as an integral part of this programme designed to advance scholarship in the relevant fields of study. In her essay, the concept of a “natural competence of God”, developed by the Roman Catholic theologian Johann Baptist Metz (b. 1928), and the concept of *fitra* inherent to Islam are examined and likened to one another in an endeavour to stake out their potential as starting points for developing a shared religious anthropology of Abrahamic religions. By shedding light on the aspect of similarity in both concepts, Walker attempts to contribute to other promising projects seeking to bring Christianity and Islam closer together and strengthening and promoting interreligious dialogue and the development of a shared ethos between the religions. Bringing the category of miscellaneous texts to a close, this edition of the Hikma publishes a declaration drawn up by the representatives of Islamic-Theological Studies at European universities and universities of applied sciences on occasion of a gathering at the specialist conference “The Future of Islamic Theology and Religious Education within the European Region between the Priorities of Science, Politics and Society”, held on 27-28 January 2019 at the University of Vienna. The conference provided an opportunity for exchange between representatives of mainly German-speaking centres and institutes regarding the everyday challenges they are facing within the university environment, questions pertaining to research and teaching, participation of Islamic organisations, structure of advisory boards, theological profile of individual in-

stitutions and general potential for development and collaboration. This statement, which, since the beginning of the year, can be accessed on several web portals, constitutes, in effect, a paper of compromise, voicing needs, defining the status quo and, at the same time, conveying implicit criticisms with regard to the development of Islamic Theology and Religious Education at European universities and universities of applied sciences.

In the category of translations, Murat Karacan provides a translation of an Ottoman-Turkish text dating from 2014. In this piece of work, the author İzmirli İsmail Hakkı (d. 1946) addresses the value of custom (*'urf*) within Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), discussing, in so doing, the limits pertaining, in his view, to its normative function. This text serves as a riposte to Ziya Gökalp (d. 1924), who particularly emphasised the significance of custom (*'urf*), arguing that all source texts must be interpreted in light of *'urf*. İsmail Hakkı's text bears testimony for one of many debates surrounding the interpretation of authoritative source texts that were conducted in controversial fashion in the late Ottoman period and, in parts, continue even today, not only in Turkey, but also in other parts of the Islamic world.

Harald Motzki, one of the world's leading contemporary scholars of Islam and Hadith, died on 8 February earlier this year after a short illness in Goch in North Rhine-Westphalia. In a posthumous endeavour to appreciate the merits and outstanding scholarly achievements of Harald Motzki, this current edition of the *Hikma* closes with the first part of an interview conducted under my auspices in 2001 – thus bestowing upon me the great honour of interviewing such an eminent scholar of Islam at the tender age of 24 years. With due account to the length of this conversation, we will publish the second part of this interview in the ensuing issue of the *Hikma* due to be published in April next year.

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