

Preface / Vorwort

Merdan Güneş und Bülent Ucar*

Dear readers,

with this current edition of the Hikma, we bring out a special issue – the fourth of its kind – with a focus on the topic of suffering and theodicy in Christian and Islamic theology. To ensure the necessary expertise, this issue is overseen and edited conjointly by the Chair for Islamic Intellectual History, occupied by Prof. Dr. Merdan Güneş (Osnabrück), and the editorship of the Hikma. In an introductory article to the overriding topic of this issue, Güneş, together with the Roman Catholic theologian Margit Eckholt, provides insight into the debates surrounding com-*passion* and the question of theodicy, approaching the topic, by means of their joint authorship, from a well-founded interreligious perspective. In doing so, the authors explore the mystical and spiritual dimensions within Christian and Islamic theology. The article is based upon the findings and conclusions drawn from two university courses organised in collaboration between the Institutes of Islamic and Roman Catholic Theology at Osnabrück University. In the first course, offered in the winter semester 2017/2018, Islamic and Christian mysticism were likened and critically compared to one another, while in the second course, taking place in the ensuing winter semester of 2018/2019, the topic in question was enlarged by examining “*Com-*passion* – The Question of Theodicy from the Perspective of Christian and Islamic Mysticism*”. To a large extent, the latter seminar was structured around the habilitation thesis by Navid Kermani, entitled *Der Schrecken Gottes – Attar, Hiob und die metaphysische Revolte*, published in English as *The Terror of God – Attar, Job and the Metaphysical Revolt*. Approaching the topic from an interreligious perspective, Kermani explores issues of suffering and passion from diverse angles. Further expanding upon the topic in question, Martin Kellner picks up the threads of the discussion initiated by Güneş and Eckholt in his article, originally given by him as a paper during the same winter semester of 2018/2019 on the topic of com-*passion*, entitled “*Suffering in the Context of Qur’ānic Narratives*”. In the article, Kellner explores the concept of suffering with particular regard to the narrative of Job’s lament in the Qur’ān. For this endeavour, he takes recourse to the Sunni exegesis literature, showing, in the process, how the character of the prophet Job (Ayyūb) is developed in the Qur’ānic commentaries by al-Qurṭūbī (d. 671/1214) and az-Zamaḥṣarī (d. 538/1143). Further, he traces

* Prof. Dr. Merdan Güneş is Professor for Islamic Intellectual History at Osnabrück University. 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).

the meanings assigned to the experience of suffering and the explanations given to people experiencing suffering. Leading into the category of miscellanea, Georg Steins examines aspects of lament and accusation in prayer in biblical theology within the larger context of the underlying concepts of suffering and theodicy. According to Steins, the significance of the concept of “lament” for the Biblical conception of God has, so far, been rarely fully grasped. Though Christian theologians would generally consider a suffering person entitled to approach God with his or her lament, the accusation of God would be thought of as an act of rebellion or even heresy. With his contribution, Steins seeks to pave the way for a more holistic concept of “lament”, with those in prayer reminding God of His responsibility for His creation. Steins therefore considers this concept pivotal for the Biblical conceptions of God and man and the understanding of the world. Renewing and strengthening the value of lament in modern theology may safeguard the faith in God from losing its plausibility in modernity.

Reaching beyond the topic of suffering and theodicy – but without altering its interreligious focus – Veronika Zimmer und Margit Stein examine, in the second *piece of miscellanea*, *the educational experiences young people make within Muslim and Christian families*. The authors present the findings of a qualitative interview study that provides insight into perceived parental educational behaviour. The empirical study is based on the children’s appraisal of the educational climate they experience in their families and their level of satisfaction with it. A particular focus was laid on parental educational aspirations and expectations as perceived from the children’s point of view. In the course of the survey, 62 in-depth interviews were conducted with young people and subsequently analysed according to Mayring’s qualitative content analysis. As a final contribution to the category of miscellanea, Bülent Ucar remembers the late Murad Wilfried Hofmann. On 12 January earlier this year, the well-known and much acclaimed German-Muslim jurist and former diplomat passed away at 89 years of age. In an endeavour to appreciate Hofmann’s outstanding achievements and ideas that had a profound impact on many of his contemporaries, Bülent Ucar, in his obituary, relates his inspiring encounters with a man who was considered a representative of an Islam of distinctive European character. Ensuing the category of miscellanea and subsequent conference reports and reviews, this issue of the Hikma concludes, as was announced in its previous edition, with the second part of an interview that Bülent Ucar conducted, in 2001, with the late Harald Motzki, one of the world’s leading scholars of Islam and ḥadīth of our contemporary times. To posthumously pay tribute to Motzki, who passed away in February last year, the second part of the two-piece interview is published in this Hikma, bringing, as such, this volume of our journal to a rounded close.