

Preface / Vorwort

Bülent Ucar*

Dear Readers,

In this issue, you can look forward to some interesting articles on a variety of topics. In the Articles section, we present essays by Eva Kepplinger and Farid Sulaiman. Kepplinger examines the legal thought of Khaled Abou El Fadl, in which both ethical and aesthetic values play a role. In her contribution, she outlines how Abou El Fadl deals with sources that seem to contradict his understanding of ethics and aesthetics. In this context, she focuses her examination on his interpretation of a gender-related prophetic report (*ḥadīth*), which Abou El Fadl, despite its authenticity in the *isnād*, rejects on the basis of a supposed contradiction to his aforementioned understanding. In the process, Kepplinger undertakes a critique of Abou El Fadl's argumentation on this *ḥadīth*, and offers an alternative approach in dealing with this and other problematic *ḥadīths*. Sulaiman endeavours to read central terms and concepts of the Qur'an in the light of the "linguistic-pragmatic turn" initiated by Ludwig Wittgenstein. His article deals in particular with the concept of humankind in the Qur'an. He argues that the Qur'an, in and through the way it speaks of human beings, constitutes the grammar of the Islamic-religious language game, i. e. what the term "human being" means in the religious language game. In doing so, he reinterprets verse 30:30 of the Qur'an by assuming that this verse embeds this grammar in the narrative of God's creation of humankind by means of the term *fiṭra*.

In the Miscellanea section, we present a contribution by Diaa Eldin Hassanein on a practical topic related to educational methods, as well as excerpts from an older text by the renowned German Orientalist Carl Heinrich Becker (d. 1933). In his study, Hassanein shows how language aesthetics can be integrated into teaching Arabic to non-native speaker students by addressing allegory in the Qur'an. In the author's view, the exploration of these allegories helps learners to understand the rhetoric and imagery of the Qur'an. He focuses his reflections on allegories of donations and charity. In this study, Hassanein presents his personal experiences in teaching and research, which he gained over a period of six years working at the Institute of Islamic Theology at Osnabrück University. Becker, a professor at several German universities, was a pioneer of modern Oriental Studies and a key reformer of the system of higher education in the Weimar Republic. In his book entitled "*Islamstudien. Vom Werden und Wesen der islamischen Welt*" he addresses his views on matters such as the relationship between Islam and modernity. Sev-

* Prof. Dr. Bülent Ucar, editor of *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).

eral of his inspired reflections on this aspect continue to be highly topical in the contemporary German social context, hence their reproduction in this issue.

The work “*Sharḥ al-maʿrifā wa-badhī al-naṣīḥa*” by al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857) is among the treatises of pre-modern Muslim theologians on an individual’s spiritual personal devotion. In a short passage from this work, al-Muḥāsibī expresses ten pieces of advice which, in his view, help the human soul to attain righteousness. These pieces of advice, translated from Arabic to German by Samuel Dogan some time ago, are being published for the first time in this issue of Hikma. Finally, following the conference reports and reviews, we present a lively interview with Ahmed El Shamsy, an American professor of Islamic thought, conducted by Hakki Arslan. We hope our readers enjoy – and benefit from – reading these contributions.

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Bülent Ucar