

## Editorial

This June 2020 issue of *IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies* extends our commitment to engage with a wide range of topics related to civilisational studies with a distinct orientation towards religions and morality as principal catalysts in civilisational and human development.

Civilisation denotes both moral and material values. “It is all that humanity has achieved,” declared Marcel Mauss, while for Eugene Cavignac it was “a minimum of science, art, order and virtue” (Braudel, 1995, p. 4). Nevertheless, civilisation is mainly seen as a manifestation of material progress and enhancing the quality of life. Richard Greaves, in *The Civilisations of the World*, for instance, described the term civilisation as “a culture characterised by the building of cities, the development of a complex social and political structure through stratification and the evolution of a formal economic structure through the division of labour” (Greaves, 1993, pp. 1-2).

The journal of *Religion and Civilisational Studies* contributes to this discourse by highlighting the significance of religion and ethics in building civilisations. In that sense, it completely differs from the ‘Clash of Civilisations’ narration of the role of religions in contemporary world, which was introduced in 1996 by Samuel Huntington’s book, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. The Clash of Civilisations theory is devised within the frame of Huntington’s quest for a substitution paradigm to the dual ideological conflict that regulated international relations during the Cold War period. The main argument in his paradigm is that future conflicts will be due to religious and cultural differences, and as a result, they will be longer, bloodier, and more destructive.

In line with our journal’s dedication to emphasise on the harmonious and interactive nature of the various religions and cultures, the first article, “The Orientalist Legacy in Huntington’s Clash of Civilisations Theory and Its De-Mythization,” authored by Mawloud Mohadi and

Elmira Akhmetova engages in a critical analysis of Huntington's thesis. Indeed, the authors tackle Samuel Huntington's approach towards the nature of civilisation and its origins, as well as the Orientalist elements within his theory of Clash of Civilisations in particular and thoughts in general. Huntington's theory is viewed by the authors as a continuation of prior theories that have explained world order as a conflicting interaction between ideological poles. Thus, Huntington's book could be classified as the US policy-makers' attempt to trigger rivalry to create potential foes in the post-Cold War era. In contrast to the portrayal of religious and cultural diversity as a potential source of destruction and bloodshed, this article highlights the significance of religions in providing universal peace and progress, and suggests establishing a dialogue among different civilisations and cultures so as to contribute to the common human civilisation.

The following articles in the issue uphold the same orientation by highlighting the constructive function of religions in societal wellbeing and state-building. Fatmir Shehu and Bukuri Zejno, for instance, explore the methodology of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in dealing with other religions based on several historical incidents that happened during the period of revelation. The authors highlight that the essence of the Prophetic methodology in dealing with the followers of different faiths and cultures was built on the tawhidic paradigm based on practice of wisdom, compassion, fairness, respect and good advice. By his actions and attitude, the Prophet (PBUH) created a friendly environment in the inter-religious discourse, and showed the best historical example of religious tolerance and dialogue. As the article demonstrates, the Prophet (PBUH) mostly utilised six methods (descriptive, objective, altruistic, analytical, dialogical and pacific) in responding to the behaviours and claims of other religions' adherents. As the incidents discussed in this paper demonstrate, he consequently achieved (1) changing non-Muslims' hostile feelings towards him, (2) respecting him and his Prophetic mission, (3) embracing Islam by others, and (4) establishing a friendly relationship and peaceful coexistence between Muslims and other religious communities. Hence, according to the authors, Islam encourages the establishment of good relations with the followers of other religions and thus, there is a need to study, analyse and understand the Prophet's methodologies and apply them to the relevant discourses and realities.

The third article entitled “Muslim Specula Principum: The Art of Islamic Governance” written by Asilatul Hanaa Abdullah aims at analysing the impact of the pre-Islamic Arab and Persian cultures on the Indian Muslim civilisation, which subsequently influenced the Malay world. To display the pattern of intercivilisational interactions and dialogue of traditions, the article focuses on a particular genre of the art of governance, mirrors for princes, which derived from Islamic civilisation’s interaction with the Sassanids. This fusion of Hellenistic, Sassanid and Islamic traditions took a proper form in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, setting down the tenets of good governance in Islam. The article summarises that Islamic culture is based on the concepts of universality, openness and flexibility, which exist not in isolated chambers, but, rather, within a continuum of expanding culture. Thus, instead of having clashes and bloody conflicts, civilisations are mostly evolving, exchanging ideas and legacy, and complementing each other in terms of scientific, technological and moral advancements.

The final article written by Amjad Mohamed-Saleem, entitled “Re-Thinking Muslim Political Identity in Sri Lanka,” discusses the concept of Sri Lankan ‘Muslim’ identity which is politically ‘constructed’ as a response to colonial influence and nationalistic aspirations of other ethnic communities within the country. Based on the case of Sri Lankan Muslims, the article highlights that ethnic institutionalisation transformed religious consciousness into a political identity in order to survive as a minority group within a nation-state thus leaving the community with a hybrid identity. It also discusses the issues related to political elites of the Muslim community who failed at establishing the status of their communities and at resolving the challenges in a positive way. In this regard, the author highlights the need for behavioural changes among Muslim communities in Sri Lanka, and suggests to start projecting to benefit the whole country and become part of a peaceful solution rather than the cause of potential conflicts.

We are also pleased to carry a review of “Democratic Transitions in the Muslim World,” edited by Ali Salman, Mohammad Hashim Kamali and Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil (published in 2018 by Pelanduk Publications) contributed by Syaza Farhana Binti Mohamad Shukri. The reviewer considers this edited book as an introductory

literature beneficial for those who are beginning to dip their toes into the debate on Islam and democracy.

Finally, on behalf of the Editorial Board, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude and best wishes to Associate Professor Dr. Hazizan Md. Noon, who contributed greatly to the formation and success of this journal in his capacity as Editor-in-Chief from June 2018 until December 2019. We are indebted to Dr. Hazizan for this memorable experience, and his continual guidance and support throughout various difficulties we have faced during the publication of the initial issues. Finally, let me extend my heart-felt appreciation to all our contributors. Their valuable and enlightened contributions will, I am convinced, be of interest to scholars worldwide. Finally, my thanks and appreciation go to all members of the Editorial Board, our Editor Dr. Alwi Alatas, Book Review Editor Dr. Kaoutar Guediri and Assistant Editor Sr. Norliza Saleh. This issue became reality due to your dedication, efforts and sincerity. May Allah bless you all.

**Elmira Akhmetova**  
**Editor-in-Chief**  
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## **References**

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