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*Makmor Tumin*

## Editorial

This December 2022 issue of IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies extends our commitment to engage with a wide range of topics related specifically to Islamic religious studies, politico-social history, history of Islamic architecture, as well as contemporary social studies.

The first article by Homam Altabaa and Muhammad Naqib bin Othman entitled “Mystical Dimensions of Morality in the Selected Short Stories of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī” critically assesses the moral messages embedded in five selected short stories narrated in Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī’s work, *Mathnawi*. The stories were scrutinized by the authors against several examples of moral characteristics outlined by al-Qushayrī in his work, *al-Risālah* which include awareness of God (*murāqabah*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), renunciation (*zuhd*), patience (*sabr*), sincerity (*ikh̄lās*), striving (*mujāhadah*), repentance (*tawbah*), humility (*kh̄shuʿ*) and generosity (*sakh̄h*). The finding shows that the moral messages of the stories are in line with a good practice of Sufi.

Centred on a well-known character mentioned in the Holy Quran, Dhu’l-Qarnayn, the second article, “The Phenomenology of Dhu’l-Qarnayn’s Community Engagement: A Theoretical Model for Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) Sustainability” co-authored by Saheed Abdullahi Busari and Noor Mohammad Osmani aims to explore the community engagement approach of the historical figure towards the people of Turkish territory and compares it with the modern model of ESG sustainability, a concept that measures the sustainability and ethical impact of business activities. The outcome of the study, according to the authors, illustrates several principles that characterize Dhu’l-Qarnayn approach which are compatible with the ESG in modern society. The said principles are knowledge, wisdom, spirituality, engagement and empowerment.

Next, “*Tawhīd* as a Fundamental Element of the Islamic Worldview and Its Implications for Moral Thoughts and Values” by Akeem Olayinka Kazeem is an analysis of the *Tawhīdī* worldview from the standpoints of moral epistemology and moral psychology. Starting with some views on *Tawhīd* (the doctrine of the Oneness of God) expounded by several Muslim scholars like Imam al-Ghazālī and Ibn Taymiyyah, the author then dwells on how the *Tawhīdī* concept, the core of the Islamic worldview, affects Muslims’ moral thoughts, values and behaviours. To validate his hypothesis, the author selects several names and attributes of Allah, namely The Ever-Provider (*al-Razzāq*), The Oft-Hearing (*al-Samī‘*), The Oft-Seeing (*al-Baṣīr*) and The One Who is Swift at Reckoning (*Sarī‘ al-Ḥisāb*) and demonstrates the implications that these names and attributes have on believers, morally, intellectually, as well as spiritually.

Moving to a slightly different theme, “Civil Society in Iraqi Kurdistan: A Historical Perspective” by Jamal Mohammed Ameen Hussein and Abdulwahed Jalal Nori discusses the history of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Iraqi Kurdistan. The authors opt for a chronological approach, presenting the history of the CSOs throughout different periods in Iraqi Kurdistan that is, starting from the monarchy era (1921-1958), the Iraqi Republic (1958-1991), and 1991 onwards, i.e., after the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Given the importance of the CSOs which symbolise democracy and freedom of the Kurdish society, the paper highlights the political factors that conditioned the rise and decline of the CSOs, pointing out the periods during which the CSOs were repressed and the underlying causes, as well as the times when the CSOs experienced growth. The discussion ends with some challenges and problems faced by the CSOs in their efforts to remain relevant in the Kurdish society.

The fifth article by Nurul Shahirah binti Majlan and Alwi Alatas, “The Importance of Alhambra as a Fortress and Palaces during the Nasrid Dynasty: The Case of the Alcazaba, the Palace of Comares, and the Palace of the Lions” seeks to demonstrate the different roles of one of the most iconic monuments in the history of Islamic architecture, Alhambra. The authors shed light on its fortress, the

Alcazaba, and two of its prominent palaces, the Palace of Comares and the Palace of the Lions, pointing out the main features and traits of these structures. For avid readers of history, not only will they learn about the contributions of the Nasrids in laying the foundation of and perfecting the Alhambra, but also the socio-economic and political factors surrounding its construction, particularly the imminent threat that the Muslims faced vis-à-vis their relations with Christians in Andalusia or Iberian Peninsula.

The next article by Dwimay Fawzy, Aini Maznina A. Manaf and Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen with the title “Countering Islamophobia through Webcomics on Instagram” seeks to bring to light the efforts made by some Muslims individuals and groups to counter against the negative stereotypes of Muslims and Islam through social-media particularly via webcomics. For this purpose, the authors choose one Instagram account i.e., @yesimhotinthis that belongs to a comic artist named Huda Fahmy, where the visual and textual messages of seven webcomics that she produced and uploaded via her Instagram were assessed to identify their representations in encountering Islamophobia. The findings indicate three representations that are meant to work against Islamophobia, namely the notion of various Muslim realities as a minority, the notion of inclusive Muslims, and lastly, the notion that emphasizes equality.

Meanwhile, the recent pandemic is the focus of study for Nur Atiera Binti Yunus and Iyad M. Y. Eid who write on “Coping Strategies IIUM Malay Undergraduate Students Adopted to Proceed with Online Learning during COVID-19”. Using a qualitative research approach and face-to-face semi-structured interviews, a sample group was formed involving ten (10) IIUM Malay undergraduates to ascertain the methods and ways used by them to overcome problems studying online during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study shows that the students managed to find some coping mechanisms which enabled them to continue with the learning process despite some difficulties, and these include to control the learning environment, to communicate with someone for help, to regularly write a diary, and take short breaks.

Finally, there is a review by Makmor Tumin of a book entitled *The Caliphate of Man: Popular Sovereignty in Modern Islamic Thought* by Andrew F. March (published in 2019 by the Belknap Press, Harvard University Press). The author of the book seeks to explain the theory of democracy in Islam by examining the concept of sovereignty of God versus sovereignty of the people. In doing so, he traces the origin and development of the concept of khalifah based on his understanding of the work of a contemporary Muslim thinker, Rached Ghannouchi. The author of the book, according to the reviewer, holds the view that the idea of sovereignty in the West i.e., sovereignty of the people, is potentially applied in the Muslim world and urges his readers to accept a similar view. The reviewer concludes that while March displays a good knowledge of Islamic and Western political thoughts, he lacks what it takes to examine the concept of *khalifah* in the same way some renowned Muslim scholars did.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I would like to extend my gratitude to all contributors and reviewers who involved in this December issue. It is hoped that their valuable ideas and works will contribute to the enrichment of knowledge particularly in civilisational studies and be of interest to scholars and readers of history and civilisation worldwide.

Finally, I also wish to express my gratitude to all members of the Editorial Board, our Editor Dr. Mohd Helmi Mohd Sobri, and Associate Editor Dr. Alwi Alatas, without whose efforts and dedication, the publication of this issue will not become a reality. Thank you.

**Fauziah Fathil**  
**Editor-in-Chief**  
**December 2022**