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Editorial

This December 2023 issue of IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies consists of various topics among which Islamic philosophy and ideas, Islamic history and civilisation are the main focus. Additionally, other issues of interest include Malay historiography and the political history of Myanmar.

“Major Trends in the Study of Malay Statecraft since 1900” by Mohamad Hazizie bin Sulkafle dwells on the issue of Malay statecraft or *ketatanegaraan Melayu* outlined in the existing Malay literature dated back in the early 20th century until the present day. Taking the approach of a historiographical study, the author assesses the various elements and trends of Malay statecraft illustrated in the so-called “Mirrors for Princes” literature in particular, with *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* and *Bustan al-Salāṭīn* paving the way for such a discourse, as well as Malay *hikayat* and legal texts. Amidst the claim by some quarters that the past Malay society and rulers were bound by repressive and regressive feudal traditions to explain the intervention into their state affairs by Western colonialists, this study provides a proof of the developed state of the Malay society and the existence of a systematic and workable political system. That said, as acknowledged by the author, more studies are needed to redefine the scope and frameworks for Malay statecraft as a discipline of knowledge so that it remains relevant to the prevalent political system in Malaysia, which to some extent, is a continuation of the past Malay tradition.

The second article by Muhammad Mumtaz Ali “The Transformation of Islamic Studies: An Ethical and Methodological Analysis” seeks to re-evaluate the scope and methodological aspects of Islamic Studies as a discipline on the basis of the comprehensiveness of Islam as a religion for all, regardless of time and space. Against the common inclination to treat Islamic Studies

as a subject matter that is related to merely Muslim communities and Islam, the author argues that the discipline should encompass world realities touching the lives of people of various backgrounds by presenting Islam within a broader cultural and civilisational context. To affect this, the author proposes Muslim scholars to follow 10 universal principals in accordance with the True, Authentic, and Universal Knowledge (TAUK) concept after which process, they can educate people for a better and balanced development by adopting the true worldview and the right way of life as enjoined by the religion, Islam.

There have been many changes in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic, one being the large number of orphans arising from the COVID-10 deaths. The next article, “Emerging Social *Waqf* Model for the Welfare of Pandemic Orphans” by Saheed Busari tackles the possibility of implementing social *waqf* as a social intervention to care for the pandemic orphans. The author first discusses the concept of *waqf*, followed by some Islamic guidelines for fostering orphans through *kafala* (custody), contributions of *waqf* to social sustainability, and finally a *waqf* model which involves various groups and parties such as social workers, foster care families, etc. Given the growing concern due to numerous socio-economic problems prevalent in the contemporary society, and the endless debate on the relevancy of Islamic ideas and concepts in the present-day issues, it is timely that the idea of social *waqf* be given attention for the benefit of unfortunate members of the society.

“In Awe of the Holy City: Mecca in the Eyes of Five Medieval Travellers” brings readers to the historical past of the holy city of Mecca as perceived by five renowned world travellers among whom include Ibn Battuta and di Varthema. Set against the backdrop of Mecca during the 11th until 16th centuries, the article written by Aditya Pratama Widodo and Alwi Alatas narrates the lasting impacts that Mecca had on the minds of both the Muslim and non-Muslim travelers, as documented in their travelogues, having experienced for themselves the life in the city for a certain period of time. In short, their works describe mainly the socio-religious and economic conditions in Mecca, depicting the land, the people and their way of life. True to its status as a holy city, the authors highlight how

majority of the travelers, despite some untoward challenges and difficulties encountered during their journey or while they were there, found Mecca to be a magnificent city, well above others in the Arabian Peninsula.

“Unveiling Historical Trajectory and Civilisational Evolution: A Comparative Examination through the Lenses of Ibn Khaldun and Oswald Spengler” by Zhilwan Tahir and Abdulwahed Jalal Nori compares the views of a 14th century Muslim historian, Ibn Khaldun and those of 20th century German scholar, Oswald Spengler with regards to the rise and fall of civilisations. The findings indicate among others, a few similarities in their views such as the cyclical pattern of history as well as several differences for instance, their interpretations of historical events and the causal factors for the growth of civilisations. This interesting comparison of ideas extracted from *Muqaddimah* and *The Decline of the West* is noteworthy in view of the great influence that both scholars had on the understandings held by the later and contemporary historians. Nonetheless, as rightly pointed out by the authors, the socio-economic and political contexts of the scholars’ views need to be taken into consideration to prevent oversimplifying historical past and the evolution of human society.

The next article written by Amirah Syuhada binti Shahrudin and Fauziah Fathil, “The Power Struggle between the Military Junta and Democracy in Myanmar” explores post-independent political history of Myanmar focusing on the continuous struggle between the military junta or Tatmadaw and the democratic people of Myanmar. Starting with the country’s political history prior to Western colonial rule, the discussion continues with Myanmar under British and how their policies partly contributed to political problems in the later period which saw the ascendancy of Myanmar’s military forces to power by the 1960’s. The democratic movement exemplified in the formation of the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, and their conflict with the military junta formed the center of the discussion with issues like ethnic division of Myanmar and the British legacy of ‘divide and rule’ deemed as among the primary reasons for conflict. A special discussion on the

ethnic of Rohingyas as part in parcel of the ethnic-related problems in Myanmar is briefly deliberated in the article.

Finally, a book review by Makmor Tumin based on the work of Idris Zakaria, *The Summary of Islamic Political Thought (Ikhtisar Pemikiran Politik Islam)* (published in 2019 by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur) deals with the spread of Western political philosophy especially Greek, in the Muslim world, focusing on mainly the thoughts of two prominent Muslim scholars, al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. A former professor of theology and political philosophy, the author of the book, further points out the need for Muslim government and society of today to learn political philosophy expounded by both scholars. Makmor Tumin's take of the work entails a few observations; while it is still necessary to acknowledge the influence of Greek ideas on Muslim scholars, in today's context, more heed needs to be given to the views of Muslim scholars in response to contemporary issues such as liberalism. Moreover, other Western strains of thought that influenced Muslim thinkers and worth looking into are Rawlsian and Habermasian, and that attention should also be given to non-Sunni scholars in the field of political philosophy apart from those belong to the Sunni group.

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 and benefit readers and students 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, Associate Editor Dr. Alwi Alatas, and Assistant Editor Sr. Norliza Saleh, without whose efforts and dedication, the publication of this issue will not become a reality. Thank you.

Fauziah Fathil
Editor-in-Chief
December 2023