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Makmor Tumin

Editorial

This June 2025 issue of the IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) comprises various topics, particularly related to Islamic history and civilisation, as well as Islamic philosophy and political history.

The first article by Meryem Teke and Okan Doğan, **“Prostration (προσκυνέω) as a Definitive Sign of the Final Messenger in Jesus’ Conversation with the Samaritan Woman (John 4:19-26)”** seeks to particularly demonstrate that Biblical word *προσκυνέω* (*proskyneō*) mentioned in the Johannine passage should be taken to mean “prostrate” instead of “worship”. While many leading Bible scholars accepted the latter translation, the authors argued that it was inaccurate. Instead, the word “prostrate” is more precise, and this leads to the conclusion that Jesus’ act of worship resembles that of *ṣalāh* (prayer) performed by Prophet Muḥammad, with the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman narrated in the Bible can also be found in the Qur’an (Surah al-Fath), thus provides the historical context needed.

Next, Ehsanul Mahbub’s article, **“Religion, Nationalism, and Political Evolution: A Historical Analysis of Identity and Security in Bangladesh,”** explains the issue of nationalism and political identity in Bangladesh from 1971 onwards. The focus is on the tension between two seemingly similar yet different sentiments, namely, Bengali nationalism versus Bangladeshi nationalism, tracing back their origin and evolution from the colonial era to the contemporary period. While the former is described as secular, emphasising the linguistic and historical roots, the latter includes broader cultural identities with Islam or religion as the main element. The author asserted, it was due to this conflict that the country suffers from various crises in the realm of national identity, national unity, political stability, and national security.

The next article by Spahic Omer titled **“Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī: The Founder of Muslim Modern Reformist Thought,”** tackles the pan-Islamic reformist thought propounded by the renowned nineteenth-century Muslim thinker. Trying to assess the exhausted topic from a different perspective, the author scrutinises, among others, issues like al-Afghānī’s response to Western challenges in terms of their biased views of Islam. The conclusion drawn from the discussion is that al-Afghānī’s contributions to Islamic religious scholarship were immense, thus making him one of the pioneers of the modernist movements in the Muslim world.

Also refuting Western misrepresentations, **“Decolonising the History of Islam in the “Lands below the Wind”: The Orientalist vis-à-vis Revisionist Theories”** by Syamsuddin Arif critically scrutinises Western or Orientalist narratives about the coming, spread, and influence of Islam in the Malay World. The author’s effort to decolonise historical writing on the said topic is commendable since, as he has rightly argued, the long-established views of the West embedded in the existing literature have caused problems for the local population in understanding their history.

The next article, titled **“Mind, Morality, and Medicine: A Historical Inquiry into Mental Asylums in the Muslim World”** by Asilatul Hanaa Abdullah highlights the contributions of Islamic civilisation in mental health care. Having assessed Islamic philosophy and medical ethics pioneered by renowned scholars like al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī, and analysing the role of *bīmāristān* in major Islamic cities, the author maintained that the Muslims have pre-dated the Western world in the development of mental health care, exemplified in

their holistic approach during the early Islamic period and pre-colonial era. The work of Bzhar Othman Ahmed, Star Shekh Hassan, and Rebaz Dlawar Omar, **“The Economic Life of Scholars in Rawandz 1813 – 1916”** also sheds light on the Muslim legacy. It discusses the economic life of scholars in the city of Rawandz, Kurdistan, from 1813 to 1916, demonstrating how intellectual scholarship is revered by authorities or rulers in Islamic civilisation.

Next, **“Demystifying the Religionisation of Commercial Begging in Northern Nigeria: The Revival of Philanthropy among Muslims”** by Aliyu Alhaji Rabi'u, Ibrahim Dahiru Idriss, and Sani Rabi'u seeks to disassociate *ṣadaqah* from commercial street begging, which is a prevalent practice among the youth in Northern Nigeria. To eliminate the unsolicited practice, the authors promote philanthropy among Muslims through *waqf* and *zakāh*, and emphasise the need to empower the youth through education, entrepreneurship, and vocational training.

The book review by Makmor Tumin discusses the work of Ongaro, E. & Tantardini, M., *Religion and public administration: An introduction* (published in 2023 by Edward Elgar Publishing). The book explains how religion permeates public administration across different world traditions in Asia and Europe, either in terms of institutional structures or morality, despite its dismissal by various quarters. In his review, Makmor Tumin noted that while the work misses some relevant points, for instance, discussion on religion and plural society, and religion vis-à-vis gender roles, it deserves a wide readership as it promotes better governance in the current society.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all contributors and reviewers who were involved in this June issue. It is hoped that the valuable ideas and engaging works of the contributors or authors will enrich the existing knowledge and benefit readers and students of history and civilisation worldwide.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all members of the Editorial Board, our Editor Dr. Mohd Helmi Mohd Sobri, and Associate Editors, namely Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alwi Alatas, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rabi'ah Aminudin, and Dr. Mohamad Firdaus Mansor Majdin, without whose efforts and dedication, the publication of this issue would not have become a reality. Thank you.

Fauziah Fathil
Editor-in-Chief
June 2025