

Preface / Vorwort

Editor / Herausgeber*

Dear readers,

It has proved difficult to find a common title for this, the fourth edition of the *Hikma*, given the large variety of different subjects covered in the main articles. Thus, while the first article focuses on Islamic feminism, the second critically examines the early history of the Islamic religion, the third considers the *Iḥtilāf* as a challenge and an opportunity, the fourth appraises the basis of the Islamic mysticism and the final text seeks to examine the meaning of the Koran and to interpret the pages of the Holy Book.

The title of Noha Abdel-Hady's article is "*Islamic-Feminist Societal Criticism. Shrouded Emancipation and Feminist Identity. Heba Ra'ūf 'Ezzat and 'Abla al-Kaḥlāwī*". Her contribution is divided into four subsections. Following a brief overview of the topic, the author outlines the relevance of the issue, describes some of the problems and suggests some possible solutions. The article subsequently contains a societal critique of 'Ezzat and al-Kaḥlāwī. It finishes by considering the models of society developed by 'Ezzat and al-Kaḥlāwī and by proposing a societal model for the future.

In the following article, Friedrich Erich Dobberahn and Harald Faber examine the early history of Islam. The article has the title "*The Early History of Islam – a Gigantic Forgery? Critical Reflections over a Newer Research Field of Islamic Studies with Reference to Andreas Goetze's Book 'Religion fällt nicht vom Himmel'*" (*Religion Does Not Fall From the Sky*). The starting point and the central theme of the article is a critical analysis of the work of the so-called "Saarbrueck School" on the early history of Islam. One of the principle foci of the article is the aforementioned work from Goetze, which represents this branch of research. The article also examines the relevance of Goetze's theory that Islam has its origins in the Assyrian Church of the East for the cross-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

The following text by Bacem Dziri, entitled "*The Cultivation of the Iḥtilāf as a Contribution to Inner-Islamic Pluralism*", is centred on the diverse and complex nature of Islam, the problems this causes and the search for a solution. The plural and multifarious nature of Muslims and the Islamic religion is on the one hand the source of tensions and stagnation. However, it is on the other hand also a source of flexibility and dynamism, and thus harbours not merely the potential for violence, but also for positively shaping societal developments. The Islamic proclamation of faith or belief in the oneness of God (*Šahāda*) fluctuates between uniformity and plurality, depending on three paradigms: the perception of Islam from 'others', the societal reality and what is considered to be 'ideal' in an Islamic sense. This is something which Seyyed Hosein Nasr has described as the theoretical and practical dilemma of the Islamic religion. A way of solving this dilemma remains to be found. In his work, Nasr focuses predominantly on the historically significant role of Islamic law and its conceptualisation of *Iḥtilāf*.

In the next article, Merdan Güneş writes about "*The Foundations of Islamic Mysticism*". In this text, Sufism is described as having its roots in Islam, with the Koran and the Sunna being the source of Sufism. The author discusses how the Islamic mysticism has been affected and influenced by other traditions (i.e. Iranian, Indian, Christian and Neoplatonian), before summa-

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rising and bringing the threads together in the following key sentence: “*ṣūfīs* are convinced that Islam without Sufism is inconceivable, in the same way that Sufism without Islam is also inconceivable.”

The text from Lahbib El Mallouki entitled “*As-siyāq or the Context as a Semantic Instrument and the Basic Rule of Uṣūl at-tafsīr*” provides the last article in this edition of the journal. The paper aims to understand and to interpret the Koran, and in doing so places particular emphasis on the context as the medium through which the meaning of the Holy Book is communicated to its readers. The article also compares and contrasts lexical and operational meanings and highlights the linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts in which the various sections of the Koran are imbedded.

The second section of the journal contains a number of conference reports. The first of these was written by Elif Medeni on the conference entitled *Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam. Historical Foundations – Contemporary Impact* which took place in Göttingen. This is followed by reports from Jenin Abed on the conference of the DAVO in Berlin and from Birgit Krawietz on the international congress *900 Years al-Ġazālī Against the Background of the Islamic Sciences* which took place at the University of Osnabrück. Subsequently, Elif Medeni gives an insight into the conference *Making European Muslims: Islam and the Struggle over Beliefs, Perceptions and Identities among Children and Young People in Western Europe* which was held at the Aarhus University in Copenhagen. This section also contains reports from Kerim Kudo on the symposium *Bosnian Islam as a Bridge or Springboard (Brückenschläge) – a Model for the Future in Europe?* organised by the Academy of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, and from Jörg Ballnus on the seminar *State and Religion: Challenges and Secularism* in Dushanbe/Tajikistan. The same author also penned the review on the conference *The Theological Forum Christianity – Islam. God’s Messengers* at the Academy of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart.

The third section contains reviews of current literature. The first book review is by Cemal Tosun on a recent release from Ucar et al. (eds.) entitled *EinBlick in den Islam* (roughly translated as *An Insight into Islam*). This is followed by a review by Bacem Dziri on Frank Griffel’s work *Ibn Rushd: Maßgebliche Abhandlung – Fasl al-maqal* (i.e. *The Most Important Works of Ibn Rushd – Fasl al-maqal*). Adem Aygün subsequently critically engages with Yaşar Sarıkaya’s book *401 Hadithe für den islamischen Religionsunterricht (401 Hadiths for Islamic Religious Teaching)*. The final review is written by Musa Bagrac on the new book by Mohamed Aziz Lahbabi entitled *Der Mensch: Zeuge Gottes. Der Entwurf einer islamischen Anthropologie (Man: God’s Witness. A Blueprint for a Future Islamic Anthropology)*. This fourth edition of *Hikma* concludes with an interview with Murad Wilfried Hofmann.

This edition was, like all editions of *Hikma*, only possible with the help of many people. In this context, I would like to firstly thank the authors, the kalām publishing house and Fahimah Ulfat. In addition, I would like to also thank the entire *Hikma*-team in Osnabrück: Anna Wiebke Klie, Bettina Kruse-Schröder, Bacem Dziri and Duncan Cooper. I would finally also like to thank our readers, for whom this edition of *Hikma* has been written.

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