

FROM THE EDITORS

In this issue of *Ilahiyat Studies* we present four articles and seven carefully selected books, reviewed by well-qualified reviewers in their respective fields.

The first paper in the issue is “*Kenosis* (Self-Limitation of God): A Philosophical and Theological Approach” by Hasan Özalp. The article focuses on an age-old problem of the theistic concept of God and its relation to the issue of the absolute perfection of God and related topics. In his attempt to elucidate the problem of *kenosis*, the author presents a careful analysis of some of the leading scholars in the field with different religious, philosophical, and cultural backgrounds. As the author makes it clear, the article raises more questions than answers, which will invite other scholars to be part of the debate.

Our second paper revisits in three steps one of the controversial topics in the field of history of Islam by asking the question of “Was Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī ‘Exiled’ to al-Rabadha?” Mr. Hañabay presents a nuanced analysis of various positions on the topic without siding with one or the other of these positions because the multiplicity of narratives makes it scientifically impossible to determine which position is more accurate. What becomes clear, however, is that the uneasy relations between ‘Uthmān and Abū Dharr had great impact upon the religious, ethical, and political climate of the following generation of Muslims.

In her article “Tanners of Bursa in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” Dr. Maydaer treats one of the oldest occupations of human race, tannery as it pertains to the cultural, commercial, and religious life of Bursa. The subject-matter itself is interesting; but what makes it even more interesting and valuable is the fact that it is the first study that examines the tannery as an occupation and the way it was part of the commercial and religious life of Bursa, bringing to light one of the

least known and yet very effective shapers of society in many respects.

February 28, 1997 is remembered as a postmodern coup de'etat in the psyche of the Turkish society. Our final article "The Ebb and Flow of Religious Education in Turkey since February 28, 1997" by Mehmet Bahçekapılı analyses and evaluates the ebb and the flow of religious education since that 'coup.' The author aims to establish a close relationship between the changes in religious education policies and the changes in political life of Turkey. He argues that the new era, as the author puts it, which started in 2002, ushered in a counter-acceleration in religious education as the political climate of Turkey changed, providing the reader with ample statistical evidence. The article suggests that governmental role in religious education should be kept at a minimal level to allow civil religious organizations to flourish, thus reducing the risk of using religion as a political tool to manipulate the masses.

Our readers will find the books section very fulfilling because Mr. Gömbeyaz was able put together a very nice collection of review essays, again. In the mean time, we thank all our contributors and readers for their continued support and look forward to seeing you in the next issue of *Ilahiyat Studies*.