

FROM THE EDITORS

Greetings,

Welcome back to the new issue of *Ilahiyat Studies*. Regardless of our ethnic, religious, or socio-economic background, the year 2020 has been challenging for all of us. Although theologians, philosophers, and sociologists have warned us that we lived in societies replete with risks, we seem to have turned a deaf ear to those warnings. What has become clear now is that we are not living in a “risk society” anymore where the crisis was just a potential, but in a society where the crisis has become real. This crisis poses a clear and present danger to our existential security as we have experienced through, earthquakes, drought, and the Covid-19 pandemic, among others. However, there is always hope as certain things keep our hopes and aspirations alive, such as our families, friends, and the things we enjoy doing for ourselves and for the public at large. Let us hope that 2021 will be a better year for the whole world.

This issue features five articles and three book reviews. In his article “Once the First Button is Put Wrong... An Assessment of a Study by Judith Pfeiffer on *Kashf al-asrār fī ilzām al-Yahūd wa-l-aḥbār* by Yūsuf Ibn Abī ‘Abd al-Dayyān,” Fuat Aydın presents a critical analysis of J. Pfeiffer’s work on *Kashf al-asrār fī ilzām al-Yahūd wa-l-aḥbār* by Yūsuf Ibn Abī ‘Abd al-Dayyān. In so doing, Aydın tries to refute several claims presented in Pfeiffer’s work: First, Pfeiffer’s attempt to date Ibn Abī ‘Abd al-Dayyān’s text to the seventeenth century is not reasonable because he lived in the sixteenth and not in the seventeenth century. Second, the reason for writing the tract, therefore, cannot be related to the *Qāḍīzādelis - Sivāsīs* debate, but the increased visibility of the Jews in the social and cultural life of Istanbul after the immigration from Spain. Finally, Pfeiffer’s argument that Ibn Abī ‘Abd al-Dayyān literally translated Ṭāshkuprīzādah’s text *al-Radd ‘alā l-Yahūd* is historically

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inaccurate; on the contrary, it is Ṭāshkuprīzādah who benefited greatly from the work of Ibn Abī ‘Abd al-Dayyān.

Faika Çelik’s article, “An Analysis on the Operations and Functions of a Sharī‘ah Court: The Case of Ottoman Üsküdar (1547-1551),” gives a minute analysis of the operations of the Sharī‘ah court of Üsküdar and its records between the years of 1547 and 1551. The article is yet another welcome contribution to the new literature on various roles and functions of the Sharī‘ah courts in the Ottoman State, paying particular attention to the fact that the courts showed huge diversity in the roles they played in the Ottoman system. In line with this argument, the article concludes convincingly that “the court of Üsküdar in the very middle of the sixteenth century primarily functioned as a ‘public registry.’”

Ayşe Zişan Furat’s article “Teaching Religion at Turkish Public Schools: A Theme Oscillating between Faith, Culture, and Politics?” treats vexing questions about the status and nature of teaching religion at public schools within the context of Turkish society, which aims to have a laic state while maintaining its religious character. The article argues that this issue has not been settled yet, for we are still asking the same age-old questions of “What should be the essence of religious education in public schools?” “Should it aim to teach religion as a practice of faith, or should it approach religion as a cultural concept?” These questions are critical when diversity and plurality are regarded as values to be cherished globally and locally. The article aims to provide the reader with a detailed analysis of the Turkish experience to reconcile religious education with the secular education system.

The article entitled “Mullā Şadrā’s Political Legacy: Şadrā’s Theory of Justice and the Religio-Political Authority in Post-Revolutionary Iran,” by Amir Rastin Toroghi and Seyyed Mortaza Hosseini Shahrudi, attempts to analyze the influence Mullā Şadrā has had on the formation of the government in contemporary Iran through his religio-political views to protect righteousness and justice as delineated in his work. The authors try to make intelligible Şadrā’s works to explain his understanding of justice by reference to his philosophy, theology, and commentary on the Qur’ān, and the Shi‘ī tradition. They argue that there is a potential in Şadrā’s philosophical and theological discourse and in his commentary on the Qur’ān that anticipated the formation of the *walāyat-i faqīh*. They further suggest that there are other aspects

of Şadrā's philosophy that maybe connected to the theory of *walāyat-i faqīh* especially in Khomeini's case.

The final article of this issue by Umar Muhammad Noor, "Traditionist Internal Reform: Motives behind the Birth of the First Manual of *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*," aims to determine the motive behind the emergence of *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣīl baynal-rāwī wa-l-wā‘ī* by al-Rāmahurmuzī. According to Noor, although there have been plenty of theories explaining the motive behind the work, none of them could capture the real motive. Contrary to standard accounts, the author argues, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣīl* is more than just an explanatory manual that elucidates fundamental theories of the hadith discipline. Instead, the work carries reformative ideas through which al-Rāmahurmuzī attempts to change the state of traditionist scholarship after decades of decadence. The author concludes that *al-Muḥaddith* reflects al-Rāmahurmuzī's critical appraisal of the traditionists and his effort to initiate an internal reform by reviving the methodology of past ḥadīth critics in hadith preservation, which has the potential to combine aspects of both *riwāyah* and *dirāyah*.

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