

FROM THE EDITORS

Greetings and welcome to the new issue of the journal of *Ilahiyat Studies*.

Four years ago when we started the journal, we sensed that there was an urgent need for a multidisciplinary journal that would serve as a platform for those scholars with various backgrounds that were doing valuable research in Islamic and Religious studies. We are happy now to let our readers and contributors that the feedback we have received about *IS* thus far has been very positive and encouraging. The belief that the journal is fulfilling its purpose is a fulfilling feeling and is the main incentive that keeps us, as a team, going.

There has been no major change worthy of note in the policy of the *IS* except that the editorial team is expanding and getting more international and more diversified. We extend a warm welcome to the new members of the editorial team, Afnan H. Fatani, Andrew Rippin, Asma Afsaruddin, David Thomas, Frank Griffel, Maribel Fierro, Sabine Schmidtke, and Sarah Stroumsa.

We also would like to thank our former members, Adem Apak, Alan Godlas, Ali Utku, Çağfer Karadaş, Celal Türer, Kenan Gürsoy, M. Said Reçber, Musa Yıldız, Recep Kaymakcan, Vejdi Bilgin, and Yaşar Aydınli for their dedication, hard work, and sincerity. A special thank to our former associate editor İsmail Güler for his invaluable contributions from the very first day. We are not saying good bye to him because he will continue to be part of the journal as a new editorial board member.

As in previous issues, this one also contains articles and book reviews that focus on vexing problems related to Muslim life and and thought. The first article by Abdessamad Belhaj attempts to analyze the problem of the renewal of Islamic legal hermeneutics, which is one of the most controversial issues currently being debated by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islam today. Dr. Belhaj compares and contrasts the views of al-Būṭī and al-Marzūqī on the question of the extent to which the sources and procedures of *istidlāl*, legal rea-

soning, embodied in Islamic legal hermeneutics, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, should be restructured.

Mustafa Macit Karagözoğlu's study asks the question of why the Successors, (*al-Tābi'ūn*) have been given a special status not only by the scholars of *ḥadīth*, but also by the scholars of *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, and the rest of other classical Islamic sciences. He addresses the issue first from a historical perspective, and goes on to analyze three *maqtū'* reports as examples to support his argument. His conclusion is that the Successors are important because they were virtuous people, they were closer to the time of the prophet of Islam, and last but not least they have been regarded as the founders of Muslim scholarly tradition in general.

Vejdi Bilgin's article is a thought-provoking attempt to question the nature of the relationship between the rulers and the religious elite (*'ulamā'*) within the intellectual history of Islam. Dr. Bilgin argues that there have been two mutually exclusive attitudes regarding the subject matter presented by scholars. The first one is to be part of the ruling class, and the second is to keep one's distance from it. The ideal attitude, argues Bilgin, seems to have been the second approach. He illustrates his argument by studying al-Ghazālī's thought as a representative of this "ideal" attitude within its own historical context.

Necdet Subaşı's essay seeks to show the impact of modernity upon the social structures of traditional societies in various ways. Dr. Subaşı chooses Konya as a test case because it is a city where modern and traditional life forms encounter intensively. Contrary to common belief, argues Subaşı, this encounter creates new opportunities by allowing hybrid identities to emerge and new ways of coping and coming to terms with change as can be seen in the ordinary lives of the people of Konya. Every encounter is also challenging. Towards the end of the essay Dr. Subaşı directs our attention to the areas of tension as well.

As one reads the articles and book reviews, it becomes clear that there emerge more questions than answers to every subject matter treated throughout the journal, and that is good. If understanding is one of the modes of *Dasein*, then we cannot but keep asking questions.

We hope to see you again.