

## Editorial

The feature articles in this issue of *AJISS* constitute a foray into two different, but related, topics: political authority, as discussed by Tamara Sonn in "Political Authority in Classical Islamic Thought," and by Salim Mansur in "Constitutionalism and Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Pakistan," and the interrelationships among God, humanity, and the universe, as found in Yusuf Waghid's "In Search of a Boundless Ocean and New Skies: Human Creativity is a Matter of *A'māl*, Jihad, and Ijtihad," and Masudul Alam Choudhury's "Toward Islamic Political Economy at the Turn of the Century."

In her article, Tamara Sonn analyzes the source of political authority in the ideal Islamic state. Breaking up Islamic political authority between the executive and the legislative-judicial branches, Sonn reveals how the legislative-judicial branch, that is, the branch that ensured that the entire government was functioning according to the laws of God, was dominant in classical Islamic political theory. Unlike Christianity, where theology was the source of politics, Islamic legal thought constituted the source of political ideas, so much so that "the identity of a community as Islamic or not lies not in the behavior of the leader but in whether or not Islamic law prevails." Far from espousing a theocracy, concludes Sonn, the ideal Islamic state is governed as a "nomocracy."

In a similar vein, Salim Mansur's article is a critical examination of the relationship between constitutionalism and ethnic conflict, with a focus on Pakistan. Mansur challenges the analytical scheme that identifies developed societies with mature institutions of legitimate order that provide for political stability, continuity of political authority, and established rules for conflict settlement as well as, conversely, identifies developing societies with the weakness or absence of such institutions. Instead, he argues that constitutional norms, designs, and processes need not be separated from issues of institution building and that "the idea of constitutionalism needs to be integrated into the study of developing societies in order to discover how it contributes to a conciliatory process of political participation and pluralism in a society that might be potentially open to fragmentation along ethnic lines."

The other two feature articles found in this issue address the complex question of the relationship among God, humanity, and the universe. Yusuf

Waghid seeks to answer the question of whether or not human beings have the capacity for creative activity. Drawing heavily from the Qur'an, Waghid shows that, despite the distinction that exists between the creativity of God and that of the human being, a link does exist between the creativity of both. "Considering the fact that creativity constitutes God's guidance, 'creative activity' (in order to understand God's guidance) cannot be precluded from human practices."

Starting from the same premise of the God-Humanity-Universe inter-relationship as Waghid, Choudhury proposes a theoretical framework of Islamic political economy, for "Islamic political economy is one such area whose theory and practice must be subsumed within this same unique methodology of the unifying (*tawhīdī*) epistemology." In the review essay "The Philosophical Foundations of Islamic Political Economy," Muhammad A. Muqtedar Khan sets out with a similar task as Choudhury in refocusing the issues of political economy on Islam. Both authors, to borrow from Khan, attempt "to understand those philosophical foundations, principles, and instruments of Islam that are the defining characteristics of Islamic political economy."

Finally, we present Mehdi Aminrazavi's "Medieval Philosophical Discourse and Muslim-Christian Dialogue" as a reflection article. Aminrazavi contributes to the debate of Islam and the West by examining the readiness of Muslims to have a meaningful dialogue with the West. He argues that "the necessary condition for a meaningful dialogue between traditional Islam and the secular West does not exist and, therefore, that any attempt to do so at this time either will not succeed or will become a superficial survey of what we have in common, such as the Ten Commandments."

We close this issue with a varied selection of book reviews, conference reports, and abstracts of doctoral theses.

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