

Editorial Note

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This issue of the *American Journal of Islam and Society* comprises three main research articles, which respectively engage with the themes of political loyalty, justice and the just ruler, and popular preaching. We begin with Abdessamad Belhaj's study, "Political Loyalty in Reformist Islamic Ethics: Resources and Limits." Belhaj's point of departure is to consider the work of three prominent Muslim scholars: the Egyptian-Qatari Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī (1926-2022), the Mauritanian 'Abdallāh b. Bayyah (b. 1935), and the Iraqi-Qatari 'Alī al-Qaraḍāghī (b. 1949). Belhaj examines these three thinkers' contributions to the question of political loyalty, especially when Muslims are the minority in non-Muslim contexts. In this informative and insightful work, Belhaj highlights the subtle differences in each authors' approach while also placing them in conversation with well-known European theorists such as Roger Scruton and Carl Schmitt. At the same time, Belhaj also notes some of the important limitations around the Muslim reformist view (as he defines his three subjects) with regard to the political loyalty of Muslims toward non-Muslims, especially in increasingly pluralist states and societies.

We then turn to Fadi Zatari and Omar Fili's contribution, "Justice and the Just Ruler in the Islamic Mirror of Princes." The article explores the concept of justice in the *al-Ādāb al-Sultānīyah* literature, while also advancing an important critique of Muslim modernists' own criticism

of this body of work. As Zadari and Fili argue, modernist critics of this classical literature on justice and just rule have typically contended that pre-modern Muslim political thought lacked a proper definition of justice, and instead preferred to merely uphold an authoritarian status quo. Reductive views of the premodern tradition are increasingly coming under criticism from a range of angles, and this article contributes to that conversation in significant ways.

For our third research article for this issue, we then have Hatim Mahamid and Younis Abu Alhaija's work, "Popular Religious Preaching as Informal Education and its Impact on Medieval Islamic Culture." Their article considers the place of popular preaching in premodern Muslim culture and society, which the authors highlight also acted as a kind of mass education for the public. By considering a range of different popular preaching assemblies and gatherings, often sponsored by Sufi shaykhs or rulers, the authors show that the primary objective of these events and initiatives was the preserving of Islamic values and moral rules. At times, however, popular preaching also functioned simultaneously as a certain kind of propaganda, a form of political activity, and even as leisure.

This issue also includes two insightful forum pieces. The first is Mohamed Alio's contribution, "The Mazrui Dynasty: Serving Islam in East Africa" and the second is Shahzar Raza Khan's piece on the famous Urdu poet Akbar Allahabadi. This issue of the *American Journal of Islam and Society* also includes several book reviews, including Iymon Majid's review essay "Integrating Kashmir." Majid's essay considers two recently published and important works, Shahla Hussain's *Kashmir in the Aftermath of Partition* and Hafsa Kanjwal's *Colonizing Kashmir: State-Building under Indian Occupation*.

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