

# Editorial Note

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This issue of the *American Journal of Islam and Society* comprises three primary research articles, which respectively engage the themes of political obedience, the relationship between religiosity and sustainable behavior, and the interpretation of texts. First, we have Bachar Bakour's article, "Reconceptualizing Political Obedience in Islamic Thought: An Analytical study of Ḥadīth Literature." Bakour examines the highly important question – both historically and today – of obedience to the ruler in the Islamic tradition. He focuses on prominent ḥadīth collections, most notably Ibn al-Athīr's *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl fī Aḥādīth al-Rasūl*. Through a comprehensive textual and contextual analysis, Bakour extends his exploration to include both classical and contemporary works of Islamic political thought. Significantly, Bakour delineates a three-tiered classification of obedience: normative obedience rooted in love and respect for just rulers, obedience out of necessity (applied to corrupt rulers in Muslim history prior to the collapse of the Caliphate), and a form of emergency obedience to leaders in the contemporary era. Bakour notes that, on the basis of the maxim, "averting harm takes priority over bringing the benefit," Islamic law historically has ordered that the despotism of the ruler, oftentimes viewed as a *fait accompli*, is something that ought to be endured, until the time becomes ripe for change.

Next, we have the intriguing and exhaustively researched work by Sahibzada Muhammad Hamza and Nasim Shah Shirazi, "The Role of Religiosity in Shaping Sustainable Behavior: A Global Perspective." Their article provides an important contribution to the current literature on sustainable behavior and religiosity by moving beyond small studies of local contexts to provide a global analysis over several decades. As they do so, the authors consider the relationship between religiosity,

income, and sustainable behavior in relation to key themes such as environmental dominion and environmental stewardship, both of which are present in religious traditions to varying degrees. As an area of growing interest, which remains understudied, this article provides insightful and thought-provoking conclusions about the ethical relationships between religiosity and wealth in a modern world increasingly threatened by climate breakdown and environmental destruction. Important too is the authors' highlighting of the paradox that economically developed states that in recent years have become ardent champions of sustainable behaviors and practices are typically those that, historically (and also to this day of course), caused major environmental degradation during previous industrial revolutions. Today, these nations, which are also typically more secular, are generally more likely to be proponents of sustainability. In turn, these nations call upon less-developed nations, which typically exhibit higher levels of religiosity, to adopt similar environmental conservation efforts. In this dynamic, religiosity often comes to be labeled an inherently adverse influence on environmental stewardship. The authors argue this is a deeply biased inference, which they address.

Our third research article for this issue is Naveed Anjum's study, "Textual Authority and Modern Urdū Exegetical Interpretations: A Case Study of Q.4:34." Here, Anjum provides a thoroughgoing exploration of key South Asian exegetes writing in Urdu in the modern period, ranging from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to today. While Anjum's contribution analyzes the work of some figures that readers will likely be familiar with, such as Abū al-Kalām Āzād and Abū al-a'lā al-Mawdūdī, Anjum also engages contemporary exegetes in South Asia whose work might be less well-known including Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī and Khālid Saif Allāh Raḥmānī. Importantly, Anjum's work also engages scholarship at the cutting edge of discussions of Q.4:34 including recent publications by scholars based in North America including Hadia Mubarak, Ayesha S. Chaudhry and Aysha Hidayatullah, as well as classic studies from the Arab World by the likes of Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Ashūr. Among the study's many insights, Anjum emphasizes the importance of considering contemporary South Asian exegetes' *tafsīr* of a verse like Q.4:34 in the context of

their approach to the text as a whole, which helps contextualize their fine-grained interpretations of this sensitive verse.

Lastly, this issue also includes an insightful forum piece by Ismail Hashim Abubakar on scholarly debates in Nigeria around the phenomenon of the Boko Haram insurgency. Abubakar notes that academic works (especially those published in Europe or the United States) have emphasized the link between Boko Haram and Salafism by branding the former as “Salafi-Jihadist.” However, in the Nigerian context, Abubakar highlights that importantly it was Nigerian Salafi scholars who were the ones who successfully engaged the founders of Boko Haram in a range of sophisticated arguments and debates. It is these debates that Abubakar elucidates, focusing in particular on the interactions between the founder of Boko Haram, Muhammad Yusuf, and the Nigerian scholar ‘Isa ‘Ali Pantami. Taken together, these contributions offer a wide range of thought-provoking and insightful points of departures for further exploration in a diversity of fields.

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doi: 10.35632/ajis.v42i1-2.3791