

## *Editorial*

This issue of the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* features two important articles: Sarah Marusek's ethnographic study of a grassroots Islamic movement in Lebanon reconfiguring (even resisting) secularism and neoliberalism, and Madiha Tahseen and Charissa S.L. Cheah's empirical study of the formation of American Muslim adolescents. Also featured is an extended interview with the renowned anthropologist, Talal Asad.

Marusek's study of the interaction of an Islamic movement within secular, liberal, and neoliberal structures and practices is innovative and thought-provoking. It shows how certain Shi'ite clerics and leaders are able to adapt but also simultaneously resist neoliberalism while providing services to the poor, in particular the downtrodden Shi'a population of Lebanon. The intellectual posture of these movements, she highlights, seeks to separate the rationalistic procedures and procedures of modernity from what they insist are still religious values. But straddling "forces of materialism and spirituality," Marusek argues, "need not inevitably yield a gospel of wealth. Indeed, these forces may even coalesce into a decolonial project." The Lebanese "Shi'i movements," she concludes, "are each critically engaging with secular liberalism and neoliberal capitalism on their own terms, in profoundly interesting, complex, and contradictory ways." This is an illuminating study which alludes to the contradictions and limits of embedding religious values and rationality in neoliberal and secular structures and practices, which themselves are inevitably instilling their own values and rationality as they must in order to be fully efficient on their own terms. The struggle, the author suggests, is ongoing and worthwhile.

Tahseen and Cheah's study investigates the relationship between mental and social health of the American Muslim youth and their identity. This carefully constructed empirical study confirms the assessment long felt by American Muslim leaders and thinkers: that the healthiest and most ad-

justed youth are those that are stronger in their religious identity while also being well-adjusted and at home in American society.

My conversation with Talal Asad took place in the heady days of the Arab uprisings, before their fate was sealed by the regional autocrats. It is reproduced here with minor changes. Many of its concerns are not specific to the political upheaval and optimism of the time, but are long-standing academic concerns that the events of those years certainly threw into sharp relief. Most people seem to now have forgotten that the Arab uprisings were first and foremost about the painful injustices and inequalities inflicted by the neoliberal policies of world powers that have played havoc with the region since at least the 1980s. From neoliberalism and capitalism, the conversation moves to issues of Islamic political tradition, rebellion, and governance, to biographical vignettes from both of our lives, ending finally with the question of Islamic tradition as a way to combat the contemporary nihilism of the material as well as intellectual trends of our times.

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