

# Editorial Note

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The four articles, two review essays, various book reviews, and obituary contained in this issue all revolve around contestations of Islamic authority. Notably, two of these articles are drawn from the AJIS symposium on *Maqāṣid* whose first set of essays were featured in the previous issue (38:3-4) dedicated to the topic.

In the first article, “Agents of Grace,” Ali Altaf Mian develops a sophisticated and nuanced reading of “intentionality” in the work of the moral theologian al-Ghazali. Mian reads the latter’s work to disclose ethical action as a site of contingency and ambivalence, indeed of the subject’s “non-sovereignty.” He contributes this theorization of intentionality as a constructive critique of accounts of ethical agency in the anthropology of Islam.

In the second article, “No Scholars in the West,” Emily Goshey carefully unpacks the ostensible paradox by which Western Salafis who studied in the Muslim world are not seen as “scholars” by the very communities they lead. What then comprises religious authority and scholarship within these models of knowledge transmission? Goshey tracks the dynamics of scholarship and community leadership based on fieldwork with African American Salafi affiliate communities in Philadelphia.

In the third article, “*Maqāṣidi* Models for an ‘Islamic’ Medical Ethics,” Aasim Padela presents a typology of *maqāṣid*-based approaches to medical ethics. Whether requiring a field-based redefinition, a conceptual extension, or a text-based postulation of the classical *maqāṣid* theory, however, Padela shows that these frameworks remain woefully

underdeveloped to offer appropriate and sufficient guidance for pressing bedside cases.

In the fourth article, “Developing an Ethic of Justice,” Thahir Jamal Kiliyamannil offers a creative rereading of new Muslim movements in South India. Rather than relying on old typologies about political Islam or secularized activists, he considers the Solidarity Youth Movement to articulate an Islamic ethic of justice inspired by Abul A’la Maududi. This case study shows not only how the *maqāsid* framework may inform discourses well beyond the domains of legal practice, but also how this specific articulation of political justice is based in the praxis of the Indian Muslim minority.

These four articles and the remaining elements of the issue foreground contemporary contestations of Islamic authority. Read together, they also offer a set of terms for thinking productively about its contours, limits, affordances, and possibilities.

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