

## **Faith Saving Water: Christians, Muslims, and Water as a Critical Natural Resource**

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### **Faith Saving Water**

Water—its availability, quality, and management—is one of the biggest societal, political, and ethical challenges humans across the globe must successfully resolve to mitigate the effects of climate change. Since *Comparative Islamic Studies* is interested in how Islamic sources, theories and methods can be used to solve practical problems, it is a great pleasure to announce this issue, volume 15.1–2, which focuses on water.

The first five articles constitute a special issue titled “Faith Saving Water: Christians, Muslims, and Water as a Critical Natural Resource,” and devoted to the roles that Islam and Christianity can play in addressing the challenges related to water. Guest editors are Rana Abu-Mounes and Georgina Jardim, who introduce the collection of articles and contribute as authors, as well. The articles explore the topic “Faith Saving Water” through a range of approaches and cases—scriptural analysis, bilateral conflict, occupation and apartheid, cultural heritage, state and religious authorities, community engagement and interfaith dialogue. This way the collection fills the important function of mapping some of the many roles that peoples’ religious faiths and practices can play in relation to water management. It will be followed up by a future, complementary collection of articles convened by the same editors, which will shift the focus to environmentalism and its theological frameworks in Islamic and Christian contexts.

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*Fiqh and da'wa*

This journal issue also includes two articles about jurisprudence or *fiqh* and challenges related to method, and a review of two books about *da'wa*, "invitation" to Islam.

Although all Islamic disciplines can be applied to solve problems, *fiqh* stands out for having this as its main rationale. It aims to define what is lawful and unlawful considering the Qur'an, the Prophet's *sunna*, and the jurists' consensus.

In the first article on *fiqh*, Nayel Badareen provides an exposé over jurists and Qur'an exegetes deliberating reasons why it is lawful for Muslim men to marry Jewish and Christian women but unlawful for Muslim women to marry a non-Muslim man. Regarding methodology, Badareen shows how the power of jurists' consensus (*ijmā'*) has maintained this principle into our current time, despite the sources' openness on the matter and some modern interpreters (like the Muslim Brotherhood-influenced Hasan al-Turabi) who allow women to marry Jewish and Christian men. Interestingly, Badareen also includes some recent social research into Muslim women in interfaith marriages. By doing so, he shows that the jurists' identifications of problems and opportunities which a Muslim wife can encounter in an interfaith marriage overlap with some results from the contemporary social research. The study thus illustrates how jurists from the "classical" era through to contemporary time are considering social and inter-personal issues when giving their rulings, even though a cursory reading might suggest that their principal aim is to defend the Islamic religion and Muslims' faith.

The second article is Ahmed Salem's new contribution to this journal's ambition to review research published in non-English languages, in this case Arabic. In the last issue (14.1–2), Salem treated publications on the important method-problem of the substantive relationship between the Qur'an and the Prophet's *sunna* (*ḥadīth*), focusing on his teacher al-'Alwānī's argument that there can be no contradiction between the Qur'an and the Prophet's *sunna*, since the latter is the enactment of the divine guidance. This time Salem surveys debates from the "classical" period to today about the related method-problem of abrogation (*naskh*), i.e., when a later verse and ruling within the Qur'an is deemed to overrule an earlier one, or when a Prophetic *ḥadīth* overrules a Qur'anic verse, in cases of perceived contradictions. The topic dovetails to some extent with Badareen's study, which touches on these issues in the case of interfaith marriage. Salem's cases relate to relations between Muslims and

non-Muslims, specifically rulings on alcohol consumption and international relations (when is fighting prescribed and when is it not. He argues that the non-contradiction argument both pays the most attention to the Qur'an's own semantic contexts and makes the most theological sense: God does not contradict Himself and the Prophet did not rule against God's guidance in the Qur'an.

Finally, Marcia Hermansen reviews two books about the history and contemporary movements of *da'wa*. As "invitation" to Islam, *da'wa* aims to persuade more people to join the Islamic faith and the community of Muslims, like Christian missionary activity. But it is also an internal Islamic call to return to the true faith and its practice, which gains new impetus and gives rise to new movements, organisations, and "branches" in modern time, within colonial and post-colonial contexts, the modern political order of nation-states, migration, and global media and communications technologies.

At the heart of *da'wa* in its various forms is the idea that Islam offers solutions to human and societal needs. Within the framework I have crafted here for the other contributions to this journal issue, modern *da'wa* movements can be seen as mobilizing around the same aim that motivates the Islamic disciplines: problem solving. Since problem solving is also the motor powering all kinds of scientific research, it is unsurprising that *da'wa* movements have famously attracted large numbers of scientists and engineers.

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