

EDITORIAL

This is the Fourth issue of the **Annual Review of Islam in South Africa**. It was conceived as a means to publish data on all South African Muslim communities. It is slowly evolving in that direction in addition to carrying original short presentations of the rich complexity of life and opinion that make-up Islam in this country. We set out to review key aspects of cultural production in this issue and have stuck to this focus despite the international crisis occasioned by the tragic events in the United States on September 11, and the on-going attacks by the American-led forces on Afghanistan that began on October 7. Both dates need to be remembered. We carry a selection of locally generated commentary on these events in this issue but the arts and literature emphasis is maintained. Perhaps we all need more of the arts and humanities in order to remind ourselves of the complexities of self and society. The variety of artistic expression in past and present Islamic societies needs to be stressed as Islamic literalists here and abroad strive to impose their views of a disembodied, unhappy Islam devoid of mercy and beauty.

The first set of articles is therefore distinctly literary and cultural. The various contributors explore the themes of art and heritage, with a specific focus on literature. Gabeeba Baderoon raises interesting questions on art in the Muslim community of South Africa in her article, some of which are addressed by the figures she interviews. Crain Soudien's article picks up on a different set of questions relating to cultural heritage. He does this in light of his experiences working with the District Six Museum. Aslam Farouk-Alli's article is the first of four pieces on local writers. He explores representations of authority and religion in the work of Tatamkhulu Afrika, an accomplished novelist and poet. Leslie Marx provides a thoughtful overview of the work of Rayda Jacobs. Her article is followed by a piece by Jacobs, which gives further insight into her own work through a discussion of identity. Celia Wren explores the fiction of another prominent South African writer, Ahmed Essop. Her article is followed by a short piece by Essop himself, in which he reflects on questions of racism in light of the World Conference against Racism (WCAR) held in Durban in August.

The second set of articles has a media focus and examines issues that have sustained community interest. This section opens with a summary of the main concerns in *The Muslim Views*, a community newspaper. Faranaaz Ismail's article reviews a handful of Muslim websites operating from South Africa. In his article, Na'eem Jeenah explores the role played by South Africans in Palestinian solidarity. This is followed by the full text of the declaration issued by the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) and should be read as an appendix to Jeenah's article. The two articles that follow examine specific issues that generated considerable public debate. M. S. Sulaiman discusses the conflict that arose out of criticisms of conduct at the gravesites of Muslim Saints, while Shaheed Mathee explores the legal and moral dimensions of divorce by SMS. Both articles represent a serious engagement with classical Islamic jurisprudence. Julekha Kalla then examines aspects of Islam in the townships of the Northern Province.

The third area of focus is on the devastating events of September 11. Abdulkader Tayob asks whether it is easy to distinguish between Muslims, drawing attention to the danger of polarising a community in a simplistic and reductionist manner. Shamil Jeppie examines recent events through the lens of a historian calling for a greater sense of history. Na'eem Jeenah raises issues of moral relativism and suggests that America is still unaware of its own imperialism. Aslam Fataar's central concern is the Muslim psyche. He discusses the psychological impact of the event and how everyday life has been disturbed, even if from such a distance. The final piece in the section, by Aslam Farouk-Alli, revisits Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis and problematizes it from a conceptual and moral perspective.

The final section of the Review looks at developments in research. Bruce Lawrence's article is a reflection on some of the issues raised at the second Islamic Law in Africa conference organised by the CCI and held in Dakar. Muhammad Haron describes some of the changes that have taken place at the various institutions of higher education and how this has affected research. He also provides an update of entries to his *Muslims in South Africa: An Annotated Bibliography* first published in 1997. This issue then concludes with our own bibliographical list of recent works on Islam. Although it contains a few entries that are on Haron's list, it was decided to include the list as a separate article as it will hopefully be a regular feature of ARISA.

It is fitting in conclusion to thank all the contributors for participating in this year's edition of ARISA. The views expressed in this volume are those of the authors and not necessarily shared by the editor, the Centre for Contemporary Islam, or the University. Articles that are reproduced from other sources appear with full permission of the relevant authorities. Shathley Abrahams, Gabeeba Baderoon and Yumna Haffejee assisted with proofreading. Nabowayah Jardien helped with data capturing. Finally, it is worth noting that all previous editions of ARISA are now available on-line and can be accessed on UCT's website < www.uct.ac.za/depts/religion/ >. Simply click on **Annual Review of Islam in South Africa**.

Aslam Farouk-Alli & Shamil Jeppie