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## Journal Review: Illuminatio/Svjetionik /Almana: The Journal for New Ideas.

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## JOURNAL REVIEW

*Illuminatio/Svjetionik /Almana: The Journal for New Ideas*. Published by Al-Wasatiyya Center for Dialogue, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Vol. I, No. 1 (Spring 2020). ISSN 2712-1321 (Print)/ ISSN 2712-133X (Online).

Reviewer: Dr. İbrahim Karataş, Istanbul, Turkey.

This is a review of the first issue of the academic online journal *Illuminatio* (*Svjetionik* in Bosnian and *Almanar* in Arabic). It began publication in 2020, and will be published twice a year by Al-Wasatiyya Center for Dialogue based in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The journal is bilingual and appears in Bosnian and English. The Editor-in-Chief is Mustafa Cerić, who was the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1999 to 2012 and holds a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago. The other editors and the advisory board of the journal are prestigious local and international scholars of theology and philosophy from different religions. The stated purpose of journal is to support new ideas about religion, morality, art, nation, society, and state. The magazine aims to affirm Islamic tradition (*taşđīq*) as well as to explore innovations of social and political thoughts (*tajđīd*) through academic articles of scholars studying religion, philosophy, ethics, history, culture, art, statehood, and humanities in the context of Bosnian, regional, and international events. In an introductory section on page 13, the goal of *Illuminatio* is explained, as to:

revive the pure spirit in the human soul and to enlighten the pure mind in the human heart by reminding the soul of its primordial Covenant with God Almighty and stimulating the mind to seek the right path to the realization of the transcendental truth through the theory and practice of *taşđīq*, i.e. the assertion of divine tradition, and the theory and practice of *tajđīd*, i.e. the renovation of human thought in the service of present and future spiritual and humanistic cause, as well as in the service of a truthful individual as well as a healthy social life.

Another goal of *Illuminatio* is to promote opinions of Muslim scholars, *ulema*, while it also declares that it is open to non-Muslim thinkers from theology and from disciplines of social sciences. While emphasizing that the Islamic worldview has a specific advantage over other views, especially with regard to monotheism (*tawhid*), the journal states that interfaith and intercultural dialogue is a basic intention of *Illuminatio*. The editors underline the need for other worldviews as nobody possesses the whole truth. They say that alternative thoughts are necessary for global peace and security. The table of content of this issue consist of:

Mustafa Cerić, “The Light of Spirit and Mind: An Introduction”

Mehmed Akšamija, “An Analysis of Terminological Determinants ‘Art of Islam’ and ‘Islamic Art.’”

Ferid Muhić, “Bosniaks and Bosnia: A Study in Philosophy of Politics.”

Mustafa Cerić, “The Time of Dialectical Spiritualism: From Medina to Mecca Charter.”

Ekrem Tucaković, “Synthetic and Contextual Studies of Islam in Educational Institutions of the Islamic Community.”

Ahmed Kulanić, “The Core tenets of Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks: Attitudes, Perceptions and Practices.”

Ahmed Alibašić, “Neither Violent nor Docile, but an Empowered Islam” a book review of Shabbir Akhtar, *Islam as a Political Religion: The Future of an Imperial Religion*.

Looking briefly at the content of some of the articles published in the first issue, we see that Mehmed A. Akšamija analyzes the concept of ‘art’ and concludes that its meaning is different in Islamic civilization when compared to other civilizations. Ferid Muhić discusses the concepts of nation and state and argues that universal nationality, culture, and civilization do not erode awareness of a specific culture and nation. He compares the membership of the European Union and EU citizenship to support his views. Ekrem Tucaković argues that educational institutions of Bosnia’s Islamic Community should offer their model based on their deep experience and authentic understanding of Islam and Islamic intellectual tradition since such a model cannot be offered by Europe. Ahmet Kulanić bases his article on a survey to reveal whether there are regional, gender, and age differences among Bosniac Muslims in terms of their religious beliefs and practices. Mustafa Cerić discusses ‘dialectical spiritualism’ as opposed to Marxist ‘dialectical materialism,’ and argues that it is time for humanity to meet the *Zeitgeist* (Spirit of the Age), which is “the Spirit of Peace” among religions and nations across the globe. He calls Muslim scholars to adapt to new circumstances and invites them to be open to interfaith dialogue without damaging fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith.

Most of the five articles and the book review discuss both Bosnia’s domestic religious issues and universal topics such as nation, state, and interreligious dialogue. The goal of promoting interreligious dialogue is considered controversial by some Islamic leaders, who are

not warm to the term. For example, Cerić's Turkish counterpart, Mehmet Görmez, former head of the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs, argues that there cannot be a dialogue between faiths, but only between clerics since interfaith dialogue means transforming religions to each other. Therefore, Cerić may further wish to clarify what he means as the term does have many opponents in certain Muslim scholarly circles, yet also has many admirers as a bridge building tool. For Bosnia and Herzegovina's multireligious population dialogue is certainly a better alternative than recourse to war and genocide.

Concerning technical issues there are two options on sequencing English and Bosnian versions of articles. They can be set out one after each other. Instead they were arranged in parallel pages so that the left page is in Bosnian and the right page is in English. Some may consider it difficult to read. Yet for readers who know both languages it enables them to easily compare the accuracy of the translation. Bosnian being closely related to other languages of the former Yugoslavia makes the journal accessible to many more readers in the region. Authors can submit articles in either of the languages; competent translations are provided by the editor. One can assume the later issues will have a larger number of international authors.

*Illuminatio/Svjetionik /Almana* uses art not merely as illustrations but for aesthetic and historical reasons and therefore their number is large. The art (mostly Islamic) is luxurious. Some of Bosnia's best graphic artists were engaged to design the publication. This journal will supplement the other Islamic periodic literature published in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is therefore a welcome idea. Thanks to the journal, Bosnian and foreign scholars will have a platform, on which to raise their views about Islam and other religions.