

*Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice*  
Call for Papers, 2026–2027

*The Umma That Leads*

The *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice* is a double-blind, peer-reviewed, online academic and interdisciplinary journal published by Indiana University and sponsored by The Islamic Seminary of America Inc. The *Journal* invites submissions which combine intellectual rigor with community engagement, offering a platform for scholars, researchers, and thinkers to share their latest findings and insights. It aims to foster dialogue between academics, activists, and community leaders on Islam—both as a faith and as a lived practice in America. To this end, successful submissions will demonstrate theoretical and methodological sophistication, engagement with existing scholarship, and accessibility to non-specialist readers.

*We have made you [believers] into a just community, so that you may bear witness [to the truth] before others and so that the Messenger may bear witness [to it] before you.<sup>1</sup>*

This Qur’ānic verse, along with the famous declaration of the Prophet ﷺ that, “Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock,”<sup>2</sup> highlight that to be a believer is to be a leader—regardless of the political or social role one holds. Leadership, in this sense, becomes an essential part of being a Muslim, and consequently, to practice Islam, is to lead and be a trustee on earth.<sup>3</sup> This challenges and shifts the conventional understandings of leadership, often defined by power and authority, to a more value-centered paradigm grounded in the Qur’ānic values of truth, accountability, service, and ethical responsibility.

On this basis, the seventh volume of the *Journal* seeks to explore the theme of an ***umma that leads***—individually and collectively. It invites critical reflection on what it means to be a leader, the diverse forms and manifestations of leadership beyond conventional notions of power, and the implications of what it means for every single Muslim to be a leader.

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<sup>1</sup> Qur’ān 2:143.

<sup>2</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 7138; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1829.

<sup>3</sup> Qur’ān 2:30.

Papers may address, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Qur'ānic and Prophetic Paradigms:** Leadership as *amāna* and *khilāfa*; prophetic models of leadership in politics, family, community, and society; lessons from the Qur'ān (e.g., *Sūrat al-Kahf*) and the Sunna.
- **Beyond Authority:** Reframing leadership as responsibility rather than privilege and authority; value-centered versus personality/authority-centered models of leadership.
- **Historical and Intellectual Perspectives:** The thoughts of classical, medieval, and modern Muslim scholars on leadership, its various domains, and manifestations (e.g., Ibn Khaldūn, al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī); the role of *waqf*, institutions, and community-led initiatives; comparative and critical reflections on different structural institutions and identity formations (e.g., *umma* vs. *dawla* vs. *sultanate*).
- **Leadership in Practice:** Institutional models in mosques and Islamic centers; case studies of leadership initiatives rooted in the Qur'ān and Sunna; strengths and challenges in leadership development and mentorship.
- **Ethics and Challenges of Leadership:** Spiritual abuse and misuse of authority; ethics of disagreement and *adab al-ikhtilāf*; guidelines for activism and civic engagement; leadership during times of crisis and oppression.
- **Leadership and Inclusion:** Women in leadership; converts and new Muslims; marginalized voices and communities within the *umma*; reflections on leadership journeys from community leaders and activists.
- **Philosophical and Contemporary Reflections:** The theological and philosophical foundations of leadership; Muslim communities navigating leadership in the modern nation-state; challenges of authority, politics, and civic responsibility in contemporary contexts.

This issue may include any of the following types of academic articles, along with shorter reflection pieces, abstracts or research briefings, book reviews, and conference reports related to the current theme:

- **Original Research Findings:** Empirical research on leadership, authority, and community & individual responsibility in Muslim contexts, with reflections on implications for the American Muslim community.
- **Theoretical Articles:** Analytical work on Qur'ān, Sunna, and Islamic traditions, engaging theological, philosophical, or ethical dimensions of leadership.
- **Historical Studies:** Examinations of past institutions, movements, and scholars that shaped Islamic and Muslim understandings of leadership and responsibility.

- **American Islamic Praxis Articles:** Studies of contemporary practices, institutions, and leadership models in Muslim communities in America.
- **Case Studies, Qualitative Interviews, and Oral Histories:** Explorations of individual leaders, imams, scholars, activists, or institutions, and how they embody or struggle with leadership responsibilities.

## **Guidelines for Authors**

### ***Types of Submissions***

The *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice* invites:

- **Academic articles** related to the current theme: 6,000–10,000 words.
- **Shorter reflection pieces** by researchers, activists, imams, and chaplains: 2,000–4,000 words.
- **Reviews of books** relevant to the current theme: 2,000–3,000 words.
- **Abstracts of dissertations and theses** which connect to the theme of the current volume: 300–500 words.
- **Research briefings** which highlight the current theme: 700–2,000 words.
- **Short reports on conferences, workshops, and intensives** related to the American Muslim community, especially in relation to the current theme: 1,000–2,000 words.

Please note that the above word counts serve as a guide. Submissions which do not adhere strictly to these word counts will still be considered.

### ***Assembly of the Manuscript***

Manuscripts should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. All submissions must conform to the *Journal* guidelines: original, unpublished research; in the Chicago (Notes-Bibliography) Style.

The manuscript of an academic article should contain the following parts: a title, an abstract, 3-5 keywords, the text, footnotes, and any tables, figures, and appendices. All submission types (i.e., articles, reflection pieces, book reviews, etc.) should be accompanied by a max. 150-word bio of the author of the submission.

### ***Submission of the Manuscript***

Submit a brief note of intent to contribute (and/or a preliminary abstract) noting the type, scope, and focus of your submission by **February 15, 2026**. You will receive a note of acceptance/non-acceptance by **the end of April 2026**.

The completed manuscript will be due by **September 30, 2026**.

The timeline for peer review and publication, after submission of completed manuscripts, is approximately **8 to 10 months**.

All submissions (both those of the initial note of intent as well as the completed manuscript) should be submitted via our **online submission portal**, which can be found at <https://bit.ly/jifpsubmissions>. Contributors will need to create an account in order to submit via the portal.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our team via e-mail at [journal@islamicseminary.us](mailto:journal@islamicseminary.us).