

## EDITORIAL

Once again it is our pleasure to have the "Guiding Light" from 'Abdul Ḥamīd AbūSulaymān under a specific title. He has arranged relevant verses from the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet to discuss the civilizational value of cleanliness. This approach has been appreciated by our readership.

In this issue of *AJISS*, Ghulam-Haider Aasi sketches the relatively unknown contribution of Muslim scholars to the history of religions and their role as the true founders of this discipline. It is important for present-day Muslim historians and social scientists to realize how their predecessors conceived the reality of sociohistorical phenomenon, a view which was based upon religious ideas and practices. The history of humanity for Muslim scholars was the history of ideas and values, for they saw religion as the core and basis of all human culture and civilization and all other branches of knowledge as being directly related to and dependent upon the science of religion. In his brief paper, Aasi has brought to our attention an unexplored legacy which, if mentioned at all, is only done so casually and very briefly by the Western scholars of Islam. This unique and voluminous literature, Aasi says, still awaits its readers, analysts, critics, and translators.

Khalid Blankinship, writing on the periodization of history, shows how the supposedly "world" history taught in the West has a strong Eurocentric bias, which is reflected in the currently acceptable division of history into ancient, medieval, and modern times based on what was happening in the West (i.e., Europe) at that time. He shows through his analysis of this three-part periodization of history how the narrow parochial origins of the Western vision of history goes back to the idea that only Western European civilization is worthy of study. He also shows the limitations of the traditional Muslim historians, who tended to be largely isolationist in their accounts, and of the assimilating Muslim modernizers, who have accepted the subordination of their history and ideas to materialist viewpoints of the West.

Blankinship argues that in light of the universality of *tawḥīd*, based on his assertion that the history of humanity is essentially a quest to know God, all human traditions contain elements that are more or less close to Islam and therefore worthy of study. He demonstrates that from an Islamic point of view, history is the universal property of everyone. As an alternative to the current Eurocentric periodization, Blankinship postulates dividing historical eras based on the approximate date of 600 CE, which he claims is a watershed

date for many of the world's cultures and not only for the Muslims. His article concludes with the request for Muslims to study the complete history of all peoples in depth, both for its own value and for the light it sheds on the riddles of human life, for the study of history should not be subject to racial, ethnic, national, and linguistic prejudices.

Ola Abdel-Kawi and James Kole present an Islamic model of the motivation process drawn from the Qur'an. By discussing the dynamics of the model in relation to social learning theory and Vroom's expectancy theory, the authors posit the existence of expectancy three. This concept is then used to formulate an Islamic expectancy theory and explore its instrumentalities and implications.

We have one article focusing on a current political debate. In his speech on September 11, 1991, President Bush announced the pursuit of a new world order as an objective of American foreign policy. In his thought-provoking paper, Hassan Elhaj Ali carefully identifies and analyzes the premises of this new world order and how they will effect the Islamic world, the Third World, and other "residents of the South."

Dilnawaz Siddiqui analyzes the current models of mass media research from a comparative perspective and then attempts to identify the main features of an Islamic perspective in terms of its principles and practical applications.

The Muslim community in North America has been a subject of more than a dozen doctoral dissertations and several scholarly conferences. Yvonne Haddad's recent book, entitled *Muslims of America* (Oxford University Press, 1991), was the result of a conference organized by the University of Massachusetts on Muslims in America. We published a report on this conference in *AJISS* 5:2. We have welcomed Larry Poston's article on the "Future of *Da'wah* in North America" based on his in-depth doctoral research on Islamic *da'wah* in this continent and the special prospects that this region holds for the emergence of an American Islamic community.

After a thorough analysis of the issue, Poston concludes his paper with the following five recommendations: a) He emphasizes the need for developing an indigenous American leadership. American converts should be trained quickly and thoroughly for positions of leadership in order to avoid the image of Islam being categorized as a foreign cult; b) The stereotypical negative image of Islam must be transformed through proper use of the media; c) Provocative anti-Christian polemics should be avoided lest they evoke a strong reaction from the evangelists in particular and from the Christians (either practicing or nonpracticing) in general; d) Muslims should promote cooperation among themselves in attempting to reach more achievable goals instead of focusing their concern on homogenizing diverse Muslim ethnic groups; and (e) Muslim individuals should be mobilized and become involved in *da'wah* activities in order to overcome the powerful assimilative influence of the



American mainstream. Poston, himself a Christian, believes that implementing these five suggestions is crucial for the future well-being and expansion of Islam in America.

Leonard Binder has been considered one of the most original Western writers on Islam and Middle East today. His book on *Islam and Liberalism* has engaged several Muslim scholars in debate. We published a review of this book earlier by S. Parvez Manzoor along with Binder's response to it. In this issue, Mona Abul-Fadl reconsiders this book in a review article. She has rightly described the elation and the expectation with which Muslim readers awaited the publication of Binder's *Islamic Liberalism*. Abul-Fadl informs us that these feelings of anticipation were misplaced. After this, she spends the rest of her article explaining why this book does not live up to its promise, why Binder seems to be "squaring the circle" instead of recognizing and advancing a new kind of expertise slowly emerging in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies.

In our "Reflections" section, we have another installment of Tāhā J. al 'Alwānī's three-part series on taqlid and ijtiḥād. This essay deals with the role of taqlid in causing the centuries-long stagnation of the Muslim mind. He argues that the absence of ijtiḥād from the Muslim mind is unnatural and that the Muslims' uncritical acceptance of practices and concepts has led to the arrest and petrification of reason. Among other factors, he traces the ummah's acceptance of taqlid to a split between the intellectual and political leadership and to the growing belief in fatalism. He then delineates the encroachment of stagnation throughout the ummah and discusses the consequences of taqlid, the institutionalization of which has had a crippling effect on the revival of Muslim self-esteem and the ability to engage in critical thinking.

We have four book reviews which deal directly with economics, politics, and sociology. Ali Darrat has reviewed Chibli Mallat's collection of essays presented at a conference on Islamic law and finance organized by the University of London. Ishtiyaque Danish reviews Mauri Saalakhān's book concerning the impact of drugs on American youth. Saalakhān, a gifted writer and American convert to Islam, has first-hand experience with inner-city America. Najib Gadhban reviews *Religious Radicalism and Politics in the Middle East*, while Mahmood Ibrahim's *Merchant Capital and Islam* has found a qualified reviewer in Muhammad Q. Zaman.

We have included reports of three international seminars. The first one, held in Malaysia, focuses on Malik Bennabi, an Algerian intellectual who remains largely unknown to those Muslims who do not read either Arabic or French. The second seminar, held in Canada, deals with the field of ethico-economics, while the third one, also held in Malaysia, looks at Islam and development in Southeast Asia.

Our final selection consists of the views and comments of two scholars who are well-grounded in their areas of specialization. Khalil Shikaki has responded to 'AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān's "The Qur'an and the Sunnah on Violence, Armed Struggle, and the Political Process" which was featured in the "Guiding Light" section in our September 1991 issue. Yusuf Ziya Kavakci, a Muslim scholar with wide experience in Islamic law and related areas, has underlined the importance of *ilm al khilāf* in North America.

Sayyid M. Syeed

## من إصدارات المعهد العالمي للفكر الإسلامي



كيف نتعامل مع القرآن  
للشيخ محمد الغزالي  
في مدارس أجراها معه  
الأستاذ عمر عبيد حسنة

تقديم د. طه جابر العلواني

تدور المدارس فيه حول مناهج فهم القرآن المجيد وقضايا تفسيره وتأويله وتصنيفه وتبويبه، وكيفية جعله المصدر الأول لثقافة المسلم المعاصر، ليستعيد العقل المسلم عافيته ويسترد القرآن المجيد دوره في عطائه وإنارته.

غلاف عادي ١٢ر٥٠ دولاراً

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