

Editorial

The first decade of the 15th century Hijrah is over. It saw the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and was marked by the development of cooperation and collaboration between various Islamic organizations and institutions around the world. The results have been most encouraging. This collaboration has contributed toward the initiation of an era of discussions and debates on the Islamization of knowledge and the development of a methodology for the reconstruction of Islamic thought. Among the consequences has been the unfolding of various intellectual forums.

One such intellectual forum for the last five years has been the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (AJISS) published jointly by the IIIT and the Association for Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS). We are greatly encouraged by its steadily increasing circulation and by the enhanced participation of social scientists as well as lay scholars.

'AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān, now Rector of the International Islamic University (IIU), Malaysia, continues to send us his inspiring selection and commentary of Qur'anic verses as the "Guiding Light."

In this issue, for the first time, we are including a paper by Ṭaha Jabir al-'Alwānī, the President of the IIIT and author of several scholarly titles in Arabic. This paper is the English rendering of his lecture delivered in Rabat, Morocco at a conference held under the aegis of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). He sketches a brief argument for establishing an Islamic alternative in thought and knowledge, not only for the benefit of Muslims, but for the common good of humanity.

Another first is the paper by Eric Winkel, a multi-lingual political scientist of the faculty of IIU Malaysia, who provides us with an analysis of Habermas and Foucault. This paper entitled "Remembering Islam . . ." brings these postwar leaders of the Frankfurt school of anarchist and radical critique into the discussion of the Islamic paradigm. Winkel explains the characterization of Habermas and Foucault of existing epistemologies as "pernicious, pervasive and truth distorting," and shows how their own vision of the possible future world is extremely restricted and inadequate. He suggests that we remember that Islam, as the divine guidance of Allah, provides the basis for a truly emancipatory meta critique.

Moving from philosophical issues to the more concrete, Ausaf Ali's paper on ". . . Islamization of Social and Behavioral Sciences" argues for a moral

explanation of human behavior and social phenomenon. He proposes a comprehensive and distinctive Islamic theory of social sciences. In his conceptualization of a possible paradigm, he concludes that to accomplish Islamization of social sciences, active cooperation between ulema and social scientists is crucial. This will allow them to interpret or reinterpret Islamic teachings and incorporate them into the social, political and economic institutions of Islamic society.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali explores specific concepts and instances where Islamic law can be imaginatively applied. He discusses the technical term *Siyasah Shar'iyah*, which means the decisions and policies made by rulers on matters for which no specific law could be found in the Shariah. His research suggests that *Siyasah Shar'iyah* rules out arbitrary and abusive exercise of power and encourages the kind of diligence and initiative on the part of the ruler which contribute to ideal government under the rule of law.

Abdul Haq Ansari argues the case for the need to develop a new discipline of Islamic Ethics in his paper of the same title. He has defined the concept and issues of Islamic ethics identifying contributions made by Muslim philosophers, sufis, theologians, jurists, and political and economic theorists. He believes Islamic Ethics will take less time to develop than Islamic Economics. This paper was presented as a keynote speech at an Islamic Ethics seminar held in India. A report on this appears in our section on "Conferences and Seminars."

In a different vein, Zawwar H. Zaidi surveys the main theories of "Conversion to Islam in South Asia" which have been propounded by Asian and Western scholars. His analysis of these theories should prompt further research. Zaidi discounts the use of force or political reward as major factors in conversion. Muslim rulers he says, were unenthusiastic about converts and sufis played only a minor role. He contends that it is the conversions carried out by the ulema that seem to be the most significant. The call to Islam, itself, was very inviting because it assured converts of a better and more meaningful role in life than they had previously enjoyed.

Under "Research Notes" we are including three items. Mona Abu-Fadl's "Convocation" represents a summary of her three part paper on "Paradigms in Political Science." The complete paper is being published separately as a supplement to this issue of *AJISS*, which is a comprehensive treatment of the subject. We hope this will generate productive debate. This "Convocation" prepares the way for the upcoming AMSS/IIT Political Science Seminar chaired by her.

In a paper designed to question basic concepts, Rasha Disūqī discusses the "Islamization of the Non-Visual Arts" presenting the Islamic basis for artistic practices. We hope to receive more papers on this issue in the future.

Kathleen Moore draws our attention to her research on legal issues con-

cerning Muslims in the U.S. and Canada as "New Claimants to Religious Tolerance." We hope her work will yield valuable insights and information, aside from contributing to the growing literature on Muslim life in North America.

Earlier we had a brief review of Akbar S. Ahmad's book *Toward Islamic Anthropology*. In this issue, however, the review article by Professor A. R. Momin entitled "Islamization of Anthropological Knowledge" serves to provide an in-depth critique of Ahmad's book and also reviews the process of Islamization of anthropology. He strongly argues against the possibility of developing Islamic anthropology within the ethnocentric and positivistic framework of Western anthropology.

There are seven items in the Book Review section and an equal number of conference and seminar reports have been included. For listings of conferences and seminars please refer to issues of the *IIIT/AMSS Newsbulletin*.

With this issue we are introducing a new feature of *AJISS*. We will be publishing abstracts of dissertations done in North America and the U.K. which are related to Islamic social sciences. We offer our thanks to University Microfilms International (UMI) for extending this facility to us. This information will inform our readers about available research. Copies may be obtained directly from the authors or UMI.

We welcome views and comments from our readers. In this issue we are publishing Aliyu Usman Tilde's critique of Ja'afar Sheikh Idrīs' paper on "Islamization of the Sciences, its Philosophy and Methodology" (*AJISS* Vol. 4 No. 2). We would like this debate to continue.

We are looking forward to greater cooperation and participation from individual scholars and institutions in widening the readership of *AJISS* and further raising its academic standards.

Sayyid Muhammad Syeed