Editorial

This special issue of the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* on Ismail al Faruqi is prepared to honor the memory and contribution of Professor Ismail al Faruqi to the academia, the history of Islamic thought, and the development of the Muslim community (Ummah). Providing a perspective twenty-five years after Professor al Faruqi's death, it provides thought-provoking papers relating of the person, mission, and intellectual jihad initiated by Professor al Faruqi.

Ismail Raji al Faruqi (1921–1986) was a great scholar of Islam in modern times. His scholarship covered a broad spectrum of Islamic studies: the study of religion, Islamic thought, approaches to knowledge, history, culture, education, interfaith dialogue, aesthetics, ethics, politics, economics, science, and gender issues. He had indeed an encyclopedic knowledge, a rare person among contemporary Muslim scholars.

Ismail al-Faruqi laid the foundation for a new interpretation and analysis of the quintessence of *tawhid* and its relevance in various dimensions of human life and thought. He also made unique contributions to the study of Islam and its relevance to the contemporary age. In fact, many of his unique contributions to Islamic scholarship remain especially relevant today and have been carried on and extended by many of his former.

Professor al Faruqi was a founder of "the school of Islamization of knowledge," which has been incorporated at several international Islamic universities. His school of thought, academic approach, and practice is also being applied by hundreds of his students who are teaching and doing research at different universities in all continents.

This special issue of the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, revisits the intellectual legacy and continuing influence of Professor Ismail al Faruqi since his death.

Professor Ismail al Faruqi has played a very special role in the lives of his students, including us – John Esposito, his first student to complete a Ph.D. degree in religion, and Imtiyaz Yusuf, who obtained his Ph.D. degree also in religion after Professor al Faruqi passed away. We were among his adopted intellectual children. John Esposito had no desire to study Is-

lam when he came to Temple University in 1968. Today, he is a University Professor of Religion and International Affairs and of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University 's Walsh School of Foreign Service and the Founding Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding; he is recognized worldwide for his contribution to Islamic studies. Imtiyaz Yusuf, engages in Muslim-Buddhist dialogue in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Imtiyaz Yusuf is the Program Director, Department of Religion, Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand. He specializes in religion with a focus on Islam in Thailand and Southeast Asia. He is currently, Senior Fellow, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Both John Esposito and Imtiyaz Yusuf were groomed intellectually by Professor al Faruqi.

Memoirs

At a recent international seminar on Professor Ismail al Faruqi, Professor John Esposito reminisced about how he came to study Islamic studies and the legacy of Professor al Faruqi[1]:

> *When I met Ismail, it was typically Ismail. He said, "Well, we have to plan your course of studies." And I said, "Well, why would you plan my course of studies?" He said, "So you can major in Islamic Studies and do your Ph.D." I said, "But I'm not going to do a Ph.D in Islamic Studies." So, he said, "Well don't worry about that." And then about a couple of months later, he called me and he said, "You know you have to study Arabic." I said, "Well, why would I want to study Arabic?" He said, "How can you continue to work in Islamic Studies?" I said, "Well I'm not going to pursue Islamic Studies," and he said, "Sit down and fill this application."I said, "What's the application for?" "To study Arabic at the University of Pennsylvania." So I filled it out, figuring I'd never get the fellowship, and I got it.*
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> *Ismail made Islam come alive in the classroom as only Ismail could do it. I remember the stories about Ramadan. During Ramadan, Ismail's approach was not only was he going to teach. The few non-Muslims felt, "This is great; it's Ramadan; there'll be short classes; or maybe he'll cancel the class." Not only was he going to teach, but he announced there would be no break.*

Because, of course he didn't word it this way, but why would he want a break? He couldn't do anything during the break. So, there was no break at all; so, he just did one course after the other with no break.

In any case, I eventually ended up going into the field. I think that the role that Ismail played at that time was a remarkable role in the Department of Religion at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was, as with all things, related to Ismail. It was constructive and productive. He initiated and built Islamic Studies despite differences with some faculty. Ismail came with a vision – and he represented and insisted upon that vision and that tradition. I think that the downside at times was the fact that, for some, Ismail was too strong; he was not a "liberal-enough" Muslim. On the one hand, he possessed a super, intellectual education, and he knew Western culture and civilization. But on the other, he was not as accommodating as many would have liked. Ismail was an incredible pioneer because when you think back, who were the Muslim scholars? Of Islam, there was a time when there were almost none. And then all of a sudden you had Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Fazlur Rahman, and Ismail al Faruqi. Basically, they were the biggies in terms of the Muslim scholars in America. There were other Muslim scholars around, but most did not have anywhere near that kind of cachet or reputation. Few of them were like these three, who also travelled all of the time all over the world and therefore were known, not only in the United States and in Europe, but known throughout the Muslim world.

As many of you celebrated the other day, Ismail was able to build a program that was not only intellectual but – when you really think about it, phenomenally – that he could build a program with so many Muslims. And yet, when I reflect back, the enormous advantage of studying at Temple was not only the exposure to Ismail's scholarship, but the exposure of studying in the United States without having to go to the Muslim world at that stage of the game and studying in a Muslim context. Not only was your professor Muslim, but the overwhelming number of students in your class that you were interacting with all the time – that you interacted with academically, that you interacted socially with – were all Muslims.

What I think made Ismail really unique ... but let me just say this other thing: two embarrassing situations with Ismail – he prided himself on knowing, on being cross-cultural; he prided himself on the number of languages he could speak and would use them freely; he prided himself on knowing Western civilization, but he also prided himself, on knowing, as you know, Christianity. And, so, he would feel free in class to say "As Paul said, in Corinthians, John...." because I was trained in and at the time teaching Catholic theology. Even though I taught scripture, I at times could probably not cite it as well as Ismail. Of course, he knew the exact text he wanted to use.

But really, what was his contribution? It wasn't just the scholarly side. It was the fact that he created a program but also an academic community in terms of the actual people that came and studied together, and he was phenomenally active and successful in raising money to bring so many young Muslim students who would never have had the opportunity to study in America. There was no university in the United States that provided the kind of funding in a massive way to graduate students that was provided, and particularly to Muslim students. No major university provided that – so that, in a sense what Ismail could do was in a couple of years, "create facts on the ground," to use that famous Israeli phrase. But within three or four years, he not only had a curriculum up there, but he had a whole group of students.

For some, the quality of the comparative study of religion wouldn't be as good as it would be today. But this was the early period in the study of comparative religions in America and at Temple. To Ismail's credit, he was way ahead of his time in his belief and vision that the next generation of young Muslim scholars had to be people who were trained in more than one religious tradition. When you consider where in fact his counterparts, who were prominent professors of Christian theology, at that time really were. Who wouldn't even have thought that way. The idea that he would then not only be involved in creating major Muslim organizations, but he's the one that got Islam into the the American Academy of Religions. The American Academy of Religions in its early days was comprised primarily of scholars of Christianity with some Judaism, then it also allowed scholars of Buddhism and Hinduism. But really the last study group, and

that's what you had to commit to, before you could then move to possibly being recognized as a really major group was to be called "a study group" – it was Ismail that created that. He created that reality, led it for ten years, and then handed it off, which was very unusual.[2]

In contrast to many Sunni Muslims, Ismail engaged the Black Muslim movement early on. I remember him bringing me during Ramadan to the Clara Muhammad Mosque in Philadelphia. At the dinner, I just leaned over to him and said, "Given many of their teachings and practices, is this really Islam? Why are you so involved here?" Ismail took the long term view. For him, this was part of both his intellectual approach as an academic, but also his da'wah. *His sense was, in time, at some point in the future, they will, as it were, come in from the cold.*

He was an intellectual, but he was also functioning as an activist on many fronts, including internationally. Those of us that were at Temple knew that you never knew where he was. Most of the time, he would make our classes; I don't remember missing classes very much. But he would also fly off to Jordan or Malaysia for one day, deliver a lecture, and fly back. And come in with the same level of energy – that tremendous amount of energy that he always had.

And that's what enabled him to be so visible internationally. Whether you went to Egypt, Sudan, or Malaysia, you discovered people knew him.

When I finished at Temple, I had no idea how well known he was. I went out as a young academic who had no visibility or reputation, but just about wherever I would go, anywhere in the Muslim world, Ismail had already been there.

He became my credential in many of these circles, whether I went to meet scholars or members of Islamic movements – like Sudan's Hasan al-Turabi, to Malaysia to meet Anwar Ibrahim, or to Lebanon and Pakistan – Ismail's name meant immediate entree.

When I look back, I realize that relative to his time, Ismail was a one man show, more than so many other scholars in his time – advising heads of government, younger scholars. and budding Islamic activists. Ismail was known in so many different venues.

The other and most important thing that has to be recognized, that other people also talked about, is the role that he and his wife

Lamya (Lois) al Faruqi played in some ways as surrogate parents to so many of the graduate students.

And maybe at times, the surrogate patriarch, but Ismail was there for his students. In many cultures, professors are people at a distance; many professors are not people who are all that accessible to their students personally as well as professionally. It was just the opposite with Ismail. He and Lois were partners in the recruitment of students from overseas, in finding funding for their scholarships and board, looking after them – often inviting them and all his students to their home.

One of the things that a lot of people aren't aware of is Ismail's willingness to take risks. When Ayatullah Khomeini came to power, I remember two interesting things. Ismail and I were in New York in a hotel room, and many of you know he strongly supported the Revolution, as did many of us. But the first thing he said to me was "I'm very worried about what's going to happen under Khomeini," and I asked, "Why?" He said, "He has been such a victim and also believes that he and his family have been such victims. I worry about some of the policies that he may implement." And yet Ismail went on in The Wall Street Journal *and other places to support him.*

But, as a result of being trained by him, I was able to go out and in fact be able to interact with Muslim audiences – and then to see programs created where at first you had non-Muslim scholars and now you have many Muslims. For example, from my center and other places, that go out into the Muslim world. And the government at that time was open to this kind of exchange that hadn't existed in those days. I think that was a product of the way in which he set things out.

Many of us know Ismail through a single lens, and aren't aware of just how diverse his interests were, and the kinds of things that he wrote on and spoke about. So, for example, if one goes back and actually says, "What did Ismail al-Faruqi say about tajdid *and* ijtihad *in his time, and relative to his time, how significant was it? Not about how relative to today." You could say relative to today, but it's secondary. But to realize and take a look at what at his time was that cutting edge – or as I said yesterday, same can be said for his early support for the idea of a dialogue of religions or a trialogue of religions.*

So, what was his contribution to Islamic Studies? What was his contribution to the development of Muslim institutions here and overseas? What was his contribution to Islamic thought? In particular, how did Ismail talk about ijtihad? How did Ismail distinguish between fiqh and Shar'iah? How did that distinction play out in terms of reform? Did he talk about universal principles and values, and if he did, what did he mean by them? Was he ahead of its time?

If you go back and look at the way Ismail spoke about it – and I looked at Ismail and Fazlur Rahman and others when I did my dissertation and then did the book on women and family law reform—the approach they took later became a given approach so much so that many people would say, "What's new about that?" Well, the reason it was new was that if you went back and saw at what time and what context were these ideas being put out there, one would see what was new and pioneering about their approaches.

I think the final area of Ismail's contribution that I would like to address is the question of religious pluralism. Ismail as both a person who was one of the people that opened the door to the dialogue and trialogue of religions, but he could also be a hardliner. While he acknowledged what the Abrahamic faiths shared in common, he could be firm about recognition and respect for religious differences as well. And that's why I think Ismail always retained his credibility within the Muslim community. On the one hand, they could see him being open to dialogue, but they also could see him in dialogue really drawing the line where he thought distinctive differences existed and ready to point out what he regarded as flaws in other religions. Ismail had the kind of personality that did not shrink from and sometimes relished intellectual debate and even conflict. The problem was that he did it at times in a combative way. For the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant culture of academia at that time, this was abrasive and not the way you did it.

Ismail liked to roll up his sleeves and really get engaged, and people didn't understand that when that was over, he moved on. It was like saying he liked the argument; he liked the fight; he was at times an intellectual wrestler or warrior. Ismail believed, "I can argue with you on your sources. I'll take you down using

Christian sources if I had to." I think that if you take those major areas and you tease them out, you wind up with somebody who really was a major transitional figure in many ways. Ismail never trained formally in Islamic Studies until after he finished his Ph.D. Now, we have lots of Muslim scholars who start early and get the best training. He was someone who began one of the major programs in the United States in Islamic Studies against all kinds of odds. He was a Muslim, wanted to really have a lot of Muslim students as well as non-Muslim students; he wanted a certain perspective or approach; Ismail was somebody who could build Muslim organizations, somebody who could be an initiator in dialogue, but draw the line, and somebody who could really engage in dialogue with the West – but did it in a context which was, as I said, a dialogue but it was a feisty dialogue. It was a dialogue that was capable of saying "Hey, when you move into this area, sorry, you can't cross that line."

I'm happy to be here. I think this is just the beginning of a time to remember Ismail, but I think it ought to be a beginning to, in a systematic way, to attempt to see that this legacy is remembered and mined. We don't even know what that legacy is, so it's not a matter of just getting together and saying, "Oh, we've got this group of people, and we'll put out one or two volumes on Ismail." If that's going to happen, there's going to have to be some more original research done. But I think it is important to reclaim the contribution that he himself made at a time when we are trying to understand how we got here and who the minds are that influence the field.

And Imtiyaz Yusuf remembers one of the greatest pieces of advice that Professor al Faruqi left behind; he once said, "Allah has been very kind, merciful and bounteous to us, even if we thank Him million times, it is not enough."

Contents

This special issue comprises seven excellent and thought-provoking articles by prominent scholars who have studied, worked, or reflected on the intellectual and practical contributions of Professor al Faruqi.

Since his death in 1986, the legacy of Professor Ismail al Faruqi has contributed intellectually to Qur'anic studies; the study of religion; Islamic

thought; education and Islamization of knowledge; interfaith dialogue; Islam and art; ethics; Islam and science; Muslim social issues; Islamic history; Islam and culture – which have practically grown and flourished through the contributions of his students and the institutions he inspired such as the International Islamic Universities and the International Institute of Islamic Thought. Hence, it is time to reconsider this legacy and design a road map for its future development. This is exactly what the papers in this special issue do.

Professor John Voll, an historian of Islamic thought and history from the eighteenth century to today, analyzes the role of Professor al Faruqi as a believing intellectual who contributed toward the development of an alternative model of modernity in which religion plays a definite and contributory role. Alternative modernity is not inevitably secular or nonreligious. This Islamic version of modernity is one amongst the multiple modernities of the globalized world. It puts forth a "modern" knowledge. Professor al Faruqi contributed to this venture through his project called the "Islamization of Knowledge." In this way, for Voll, Professor Ismail al-Faruqi illustrates the changing role of believing intellectuals in the second half of the twentieth century.

Professor Mohammad Nejatullah Siddiqi – a pioneer of Islamic economics, engaged in the theory and practice of Islamization of knowledge in the field of economics – questions whether or not the Islamization of knowledge project was linked to the movement for restoration of Islam to a position of leadership and dominance in contemporary society. After fifty years of engagement in the process of Islamization of knowledge, which started in the post-colonial era, he maintains that, "Knowledge creation and beneficial use of new knowledge are two distinct though complementary processes. Each has its own requirement. Morality rooted in spirituality is decisive in ensuring that new knowledge is used beneficially. But the creation of new knowledge requires freedoms of thought and discussion, encouragement of creativity and innovation, toleration of dissent and diversity. It requires a mindset that can entertain ambiguity, one that does not hasten to discard potential spoilers of legacies long established as sacred – requirements which the sponsors of the Islamization of knowledge project might have failed to give due weight." Furthermore, he comments that the Faruqian project can be revived by making it expansive and inclusive, by "creating universal awareness of what makes use of knowledge beneficial and prevents the fatal error of allowing *laissez faire* in knowledge-use."

The way forward is "to share the quest of knowledge and its proper use with all and everyone."

Professor Muhammad Kamal Hassan, the former rector of International Islamic University Malaysia, was a participant in the First World Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah between March 31 and April 8, 1977, in which Professor al Faruqi played a significant role. Among the conference attendees were Shaikh Ahmad Salah Jamjoom, Dr. Abdullah Omar Naseef, Dr. Muhammad Abduh Yamani, Professor Muhammad Qutb, Professor Syed Ali Ashraf, Professor Syed Naquib al-Attas, Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Zaid, and Dr. Ghulam Naqib Saqeb along with 350 other scholars. This conference laid the ground plan for the establishment of Islamic universities in Dhaka, Islamabad, Kuala Lumpur, Kampala, and Niger. Professor al Faruqi played a critical and central role in the deliberations and action plans emerging from this conference.

In this special issue, Professor Kamal Hassan's article delves into Professor al Faruqi's understanding of the role of Islamic Ummah as being the *ummatan wasatan* – "the median among the peoples of mankind" (Qur'an 2:143). For Professor al Faruqi, the concept of *al-wasatiyyah* (the middle way) explicates the concept of *al-tawazun* (Islamic balance and "golden-means"). This mode of Islamic moderation as stressed by Professor al Faruqi is today in 2011 employed by the Singaporean Muslim community in its response to the government's concern about Muslim radicalism in the republic. In this way, they do not stoop to the pressures of the country's secular or religious authorities to compromise any of their religious convictions or beliefs, however much these were distasteful to the authorities.

Professor Ibrahim Zein, a former student of Professor al Faruqi and also the former dean of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) addresses the teaching of religion at IIUM. The program was influenced by the thought and curricula developed along Faruqian lines. It is a program that delves into Faruqi's view of meta-religion rooted in an ethical paradigm giving it universal perspective and approach toward the study of comparative religion. Actually, the establishment of IIUM and the religion study curriculum implemented at IIUM is a development of Faruqi's earlier vision regarding the teaching of Islam as a civilization and worldview, which he had envisioned and hoped to apply to the academic program at the Central Institute of Islamic Research, Karachi, Pakistan during his professorship there in 1960s, but which was not realized.[3]

Professor Mohamed Aslam Haneef of the Department of Economics, IIUM, critically reviews the process of the Islamization of knowledge as applied toward the discipline of economics over the last thirty years. He isof the view that one of the lacuna behind the not yet fully developed field of Islamic economics is the nondevelopment of its methodological aspect due to assigning its teaching to scholars of *usul al-fiqh* (Muslim jurisprudence). He calls for revisiting the methodological aspect of the Faruqi work plan for the Islamization of knowledge, which has been overlooked and neglected.

Dr. Charles Fletcher of McGill University, wrote his Ph.D dissertation on the aspect of interreligious dialogue of al Faruqi's work, which will soon appear as a book.[4] Fletcher, looks at the suitability and relevance of al Faruqi's dialogical ideas in relation to Asian religions, with special reference to Buddhism. Fletcher comments that the primary weakness in Faruqi's dialogical and meta-religious principles in relation to Asian religions lies in his methodological exclusion of mystical and esoteric contributions, insights, and perspectives. Thus, rational approach to dialogue needs to be combined with other approaches. There is scope for al Faruqi's principles to be shaped and deepened further, and this continues to remain one aspect of his legacy.

Dr. M. Zaki Kirmani, Chairman, Centre for Studies on Science, Aligarh, India, revisits the forty-year Islamization of knowledge debate in relation to science. He maintains that values and worldview have an undeniable role in science and its multidimensional growth. He maintains that the role of values in science is no more controversial and if some people still deny it, it may not be long before they will reverse and reframe their opinion on the relation between science and religion.

This testimony to the living legacy of Ismail al-Faruqi, a great thinker and *mujahid* of Islam of the modern age, reminds us of what the Qur'an has said:

> Think not of those, who are slain in the way of Allah, as dead. Nay, they are living. With their Lord they have provision.
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> (Qur'an 3:169)

> And those who believe in Allah and His messengers, they are the loyal; and the martyrs are with their Lord; they have their reward and their light; while as for those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, they are owners of hell fire.
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> (Qur'an 57:19)

Endnotes

1. The International Seminar on the Legacy of Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi: Thought and Institution, jointly organized by the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminister, London, UK; Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, US; and the International Institute of Islamic Thought, UK and US; June 6 and 7, 2010, London, UK. The proceedings of the seminar will be soon available as *Islam and Knowledge: The Concept of Religion in Islamic Thought – Essays in Honour of Ismail al Faruqi*, ed. Imtiyaz Yusuf. (London: I. B. Tauris, forthcoming).
2. Richard C. Martin, "Islamic Studies in the American Academy: A Personal Reflection," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 4: 896–920.
3. Ismail al Faruqi's letter to H. A. R. Gibb, dated March 22, 1963, Karachi, in the Ismail al Faruqi Papers Collection at the International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, VA, US. Also Ismail al Faruqi, "Scheme for a Faculty of Islamic Learning at Karachi University," n.d., and Ismail al Faruqi, "A Memorandum on Methods of Creating Modern and Effective Islamic Ideology," n.d. – both documents are in the Ismail al Faruqi Papers Collection.
4. Charles Fletcher, *Muslim-Christian Engagement in the Twentieth Century: The Principles of Inter-faith Dialogue and the Work of Ismail Al-Faruqi* (London: I. B. Tauris, forthcoming)

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