

## *Editorial*

Even though interdisciplinary approaches to the study of humanity are increasingly a preferred method of study, it is still easy for scholars to isolate themselves within their field and lose touch with developments in the rest of the academy. Therefore, interdisciplinary journals such as AJISS are vital tools for helping them to keep abreast of the latest developments in areas outside their discipline but still in their realm of interest – in the case of AJISS, the study of Islam and Muslims, both historically and contemporaneously.

This issue of AJISS features outstanding essays from several academic disciplines: history, Islamic studies, management, and philosophy. We open with Muhammad Aziz's study of the rise of Sufism in Yemen, "A Short Survey of Yemeni Sufism from Its Inception to the Thirteenth Century." Aziz argues that a tradition of asceticism by Yemeni Muslims, including such prominent Companions as Abu Hurayrah, developed into the more institutionalized Sufism that appeared and was spread by the Ayyubid dynasty during the eleventh to twelfth centuries. He maintains that tracing the history of Yemeni asceticism and Sufism is important because of the political, as well as religious, role that its leading practitioners had on Yemeni life.

In "A Prophet or a Messenger: How Bona Fide a Qur'anic Concept?" Zakyi Ibrahim examines the popular practice, known to both Muslims and non-Muslim scholars of Islam, of differentiating a "prophet" from a "messenger" to make the surprising – but solidly argued – claim that the Qur'an makes no such distinction. He analyzes the positions of al-Mawardi, al-Qadi `Iyad, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Abu Bakr al-Jaza'iri and concludes that their assumptions and the inconsistencies in their conclusions fail to make the case convincing in the light of the relevant Qur'anic verses.

Shamas-Ur-Rehman Toor reviews the literature to date in a new and developing field of Islamic management in his "Developing Management from Islamic Perspectives (MIP) as a Formal Academic Discipline." Toor writes that unlike Islamic finance and banking, Islamic management theory has been neglected. He opines that the growing and somewhat disparate efforts of scholars entering the field are very promising, and hopes that his article will help them focus on certain issues that he believes are crucial for positive and beneficial long-term developments not only in the academy, but also in the actual arena of management.

The final article, M. Ashraf Adeel's "Diversity and Exclusivity: A Religion Needs Both," situates the conundrum of religious pluralism and exclusivity in an overarching framework that allows religions to make exclusivist claims while simultaneously stressing their ability to articulate pluralist visions that are conducive to world peace. He examines this issue through Qur'anic verses on religious pluralism, diversity, and exclusivity, as well as through Kierkegaard's understanding of the nature of religious faith. Adeel's well-reasoned essay points to the need for religions

to make exclusivist claims so that people can commit to them deeply. In addition, this reality reveals the need for a divinely ordained diversity of religions that enables true freedom of religious choice as well as the fulfillment of God's promise that a messenger has been sent to every people, and thus that all of them will be judged justly on the Day of Judgment according to the law brought by their messenger.

This issue's "Forum" contains two powerful essays related in different ways to issues of inter-faith dialogue. Omid Safi's "Who Put Hate in My Sunday Paper?" and Mahdi Tourage's "Fetishizing Dialogue and Commodifying Peacemaking."

Readers may recall that the "Obsession" DVD, which purportedly is about the threat "radical Islam" poses to the West, was distributed in newspapers across North America as an "advertising supplement." Safi does not discuss its contents, given that many scholars have already identified its material as propaganda that promotes hatred of Muslims, despite its claim to be focused solely on "radical Muslims." Rather, he does a fantastic piece of detective work to uncover the networks behind the DVD: who produced it, paid for it, and distributed it. He uncovers the shadowy Clarion Fund and then reveals its ties to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The entire network is alarming, given how it has tied together those known for promoting hatred of Muslims. Safi is to be congratulated for uncovering it. As he points out, "Obsession" is not a single venture, but just the first shot in a series of similar volleys. He mentions how the DVD has torn down delicate bridges between Jewish and Muslim interfaith groups that took a decade to build. Moreover, he correctly warns that the DVD poisons the American project of pluralism and justice for all.

Tourage investigates this commitment to pluralism and social justice via interreligious dialogue through his interaction with a decade-old student exchange program between the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Iran's Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute (IKERI). Demonstrating that the ideologue behind this institute promotes violence against those who disagree with its particular interpretation of Shi'ism and enjoys powerful connections to the Iranian regime, Tourage asks the important question of "Why would a most peaceful faith community like the Mennonites engage in a long-term dialogue and student exchange with a mafia-like organization run by a violently intolerant petty scholar like Mesbah-Yazdi?"

Noting that only the MCC can answer that question, as well as that the IKERI is the only institution that the Iranian regime would allow to establish such a dialogue, Tourage draws our attention to the problems of an international interreligious dialogue that exists in a bubble, one that neither promotes self-reflection nor any awareness of the power relationships that bear on such a dialogue. Without such awareness, he wonders, what hope is there for any interreligious dialogue to make a genuine and positive contribution to ending systems of oppression?

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This is my last editorial for AJISS. After five years, the time has come to move on to new projects and allow fresh ideas and new energy to work for AJISS. AJISS has been such an integral part of my life that I leave it with the pain and sorrow experi-

enced by one saying goodbye to a dear friend who is emigrating ... but also with the excitement and hope of knowing that the friend is entering a new world of adventure, as am I.

The departure is made bearable due to the capable hands that take the helm: Dr. Zakyi Ibrahim. Through a sheer coincidence, Ibrahim accepted the offer to become AJISS's next editor soon after his paper, which appears in this issue, was accepted for publication by our double blind-peer review process. He brings impressive credentials, as well as energy and fresh perspectives, to maintain and increase the journal's academic integrity and reputation: a B.A. Honors (1993) from the International Islamic University, Malaysia, with a major in Islamic studies and a minor in mass communication; and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees (2002), both in Islamic studies, from the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal. His Ph.D. thesis was entitled "Prophecy of Women in the Qur'an with a Special Focus on Ibn Hazm's Theory." Currently assistant professor of Islamic studies and world religions in the Department of Comparative Religion, California State University, Fullerton, he teaches "History and Development of Islamic Thought," "World Religions (Western and Eastern)," "Afro-American Religions and Spirituality," "Qur'an and Hadith," and "Methods of Studying Religion." He is fluent in English, Arabic, and Hausa, and has a working knowledge of French and Persian.

Also joining the AJISS team is Dr. Ali Mazrui, who replaces Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman as editor-in-chief. Mazrui, who is the Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities and director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at Binghamton University, State University of New York, is renowned for his 1986 joint BBC and PBS series "The Africans: A Triple Heritage." AJISS is most fortunate that Mazrui, who earned his Ph.D. at Oxford University and is the author of over thirty books and many articles, has agreed to make time to serve AJISS in this capacity. He brings to this position the great wisdom and foresight that has earned him an international reputation and makes him in constant demand across the world. His humility, generosity of spirit, and gentleness will grace AJISS and all those connected with it.

To the editorial team, especially Managing Editor Halil Yenigun and Copyeditor Jay Willoughby, the word "thanks" does not convey my debt of gratitude for your work. Your commitment to excellence and professionalism are outstanding. AJISS would not be what it is without your dedicated work. My replacement could not have a better team in place to work with on furthering its vision as an outstanding journal in the field. The same must be said to the associate editors, whose voluntary provision of policy advice and assistance with the submission process has been absolutely crucial and exceptional these past years, as well as our book review editor, Mahdi Tourage, who manages the entire book review process single-handedly.

Copyeditor Soha Srour and Printing Manager Obay Altaieb deserve credit for their dedication to the professional excellence of AJISS. And of course, none of it would be possible without the Boards of IIIT and AMSS for their vision and continued engagement with the mission of AJISS as its publishers. I would also like to take this chance to thank Dr. Louay Safi, Dr. Jasmin Zine, Maliha Chishti, Dr. Ejaz

Akram, Dr. Rafik Beekun, and everyone else who provided me with much needed support and guidance when I was just starting my journey with AJISS.

Finally, a special thanks to Layla Sein, the journal's former assistant editor, who so often went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure each issue's quality. And also to Dr. Jamal Barzinji for his continuous encouragement and support during my tenure at AJISS.

*Jazakum Allahu khayran* to all of you.

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Over the last twenty-six years, AJISS has carved out a special niche for itself as a journal that examines Muslim perspectives on issues of modernity, as well as the study of Islamic and Muslim history in all its complexity, from various academic disciplines. In times marked by a network that is able to mass mail a hateful piece of propaganda to millions of people under the guise of a "newspaper supplement," when Muslim women are powerless to prevent countries from banning headscarves in public schools, when Muslims are classified by western countries as "extremist" if they promote implementing the Shari`ah, when being arrested by authorities for "flying while Muslim" is no joke, when accusing a presidential candidate of "being Muslim" is seen as a blight, when the world watches mutely while a whole people is punished for the crimes of a few, and when wedding-goers are killed accidentally in cases of cultural misunderstanding, then AJISS remains an important voice of resistance and alternative perspectives.

Please continue to support AJISS through your subscriptions, encourage your library to subscribe, submit your research for publication, and send in your critical reviews and reflections to our "Forum" or the book review section.

*Al-salamu `alaykum wa rahmat Allahi wa barakatuhu.* Peace.

Katherine Bullock