

Editorial Note

When the first issue of the *American Journal of Islamic Studies* (AJIS) came out last spring, we announced that it was an organ of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) and that it is intended to serve as a forum for dialogue between Muslims in these United States and those elsewhere in the global Muslim community. We hope the number of articles published in the first and second issues of the journal have served this purpose.

In this third and fourth numbers of the journal we wish to announce a change of name. Why are we changing the name of the journal and what is the new name? Well, the new name is the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (AJISS). The decision to change the name of the journal was made by the newly elected Executive Committee of the AMSS. Under the new President, Dr. Abdulhamid AbuSulaymanm, the Executive feels that the term "Islamic Studies" does not necessarily convey the wider meaning and research objectives of the AMSS. It is true that "Islamic Studies" encompasses a great deal in terms of studies on and about the Muslim World and peoples, but to further the cause of the AMSS and its members, the journal must begin to deal with the social science issues that bear on the Muslim World. This journal, the Executive believes, could serve as the intellectual vehicle through which the Muslim identity and Muslim scholarship can not only benefit but also develop along more authentic and less dependent lines. Of course some of us in the Muslim World and within the ranks of the AMSS may argue that the very name is presumptuous. The point is well taken. Presently an Islamic social science is yet to develop but there is room for aspirations. The effort is certainly aspirational and the members of the AMSS and others interested in Islamic affairs and in research about the Muslims are called upon to give the idea a chance to develop.

But actually, what is Islamic social science? This is a body of knowledge that interprets scientifically acquired data along Islamic lines. It employs much of the tried and tested social science research methods to explain, analyse and discuss the human condition in Muslim societies; it formulates hypotheses and theories in the tradition of Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Taymiyah and pursues knowledge to the farthest limits set by the divinely *created aql* (human intellect). One distinguishing characteristics of an Islamic social science is the set of motives that propel the researcher. Rather than pursue knowledge simply for the sake of knowledge, this approach to knowledge-acquiring and knowledge-processing places much emphasis on man's role as

khalifa on earth, man's role as a *neighbor* to his fellowmen, and man's possible degeneration as a human being into the savage condition. This is to say that man can reduce himself to the level of the lowest of creation through self-abuse. An Islamic Social Science works not only for the improvement of the human material condition but it attempts to have a better understanding of man and his habitat so that man's roles identified above can be better fulfilled on earth. If the methodological and theoretical arguments can be marshalled for the gradual but firm development of this field of research and study, then the idea of an Islamic social science is worthy of human labor and human reflection. This is the stated aspiration of the journal and we hope that Muslim and non-Muslim scholars interested in this aspect of the Muslim experience in America and beyond would collaborate with us in the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge. Ibn Khaldun and al-Biruni did it during their times. The challenge is much greater today, but we believe there are enough talents in the Muslim World and beyond to achieve this goal of making social science a loving and caring companion of *din al-Islam* (religion of Islam).

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Editor-in-Chief