

Editorial

With the publication of this issue (Vol. 14, no. 4), *AJISS* becomes fourteen years old. Though many years have passed, we still look forward with much optimism and determination to realizing the *Journal's* original goals as stated in its first issue: "to serve as an effective bridge of intellectual communication between various Muslim intellectuals in the country (USA) and beyond, . . . to serve as a medium of communication between Muslims in the United States and their fellow countrymen of diverse faiths, . . . [and to] facilitate the ongoing dialogue and cooperation between "old world" Muslims and their brethren living in the West."

However, with the passage of time these goals have become focused into one principle: to provide a comprehensive Islamic vision that relates Islamic principles to issues of contemporary thought and social realities. To achieve this through a genuine process of *ijtihad*, Muslim scholars, academicians, and professionals are required to excel in their own fields of specialization, to have a thorough understanding of Islamic sources, and to have a sound knowledge and acquaintance of the changing social realities and circumstances.

The field of education, to which this issue of *AJISS* is dedicated, offers us a compelling challenge to our professed goals. From the beginning, we realized its importance. In the second issue of *AJISS*, it was pointed out that "close examination of both current and past trends in American Muslim communities show the disruptive impact of public schooling on Islamic culture. Research designed to initiate an educational alternative for Muslim communities is vital and long overdue."

What is clear now is that various alternatives should be developed at the same time. During the last fifteen years tens of full-time Islamic schools have been established in the USA and Europe. Hundreds of evening and weekend schools have also been established. Alternative curricula and textbooks are needed. This is not to neglect the public school system where the majority of Muslim children will continue to have their education and where stereotyped and false images of Islam and Muslims in various textbooks and library collections continue to bombard the minds of students, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Efforts to approach local school authorities, teachers, and textbook publishers to

correct this situation have had promising and exciting results. Muslim educators can contribute tremendously in these directions; and this issue of *AJISS* is our humble contribution.

The first feature article, by Moneer al-Otaibi and Hakim Rashid, traces the development of education in the Muslim society from the simple *halaqah* in the mosque to complex institutions that teach both revealed and acquired knowledge in various subjects. As Western colonial powers imposed themselves on one Muslim people after another, it became clear that one of their primary means of continued domination was the implementation of so-called "Western" education. Although the decline of Islamic education started prior to the colonial period, the situation in this period became complex; Islamic education was driven away from public life to isolated religious institutions, leaving secular, Western education to become dominant.

The first international conference on Islamic education in Makkah in 1977 drew attention to the need to rebuild Islamic education. Following the conference, efforts were stepped up to formulate a model. Several similar conferences were organized in rapid succession in Islamabad (1980), in Dhaka (1981), in Jakarta (1982), in Cairo (1985), and in Amman (1990). In addition, many Islamic universities and institutions were established with Islamization of education as their focus. However, up to this point, the task of producing school syllabi, textbooks and guidelines to help teachers in schools had not been performed. Educators felt the urgent need to make a breakthrough in this direction. The Sixth International Conference at Capetown (September, 1996) aimed to do just this. The conference report in this issue, written by Ghulam Saqeb, explains what happened and the expected future results.

In the second feature article, John Sahadat shows how the Islamic view of education can make a timely contribution to the contemporary world given that Islam is inclusive of both the material and spiritual dimensions of the human experience.

In the third feature article, Yusuf Waghid tries to answer the question he raises in the title "Islamic Educational Institutions: Can the Heritage Be Sustained?" The author develops some ideas of Al-Attas, and concludes that Islamic educational institutions that are not nurtured and guided by *adab* will be unsustainable.

In the fourth feature article, Alusine Jalloh presents a case study of the "Fula and Islamic Education in Freetown, Sierra Leone," and argues that the Fula educational initiatives forged a partnership between the Muslim private sector and the local educators. Thus, it provides a model that can respond to the challenge of developing and spreading Islamic education throughout Africa.

In the review essay "Winter's *Al-Ghazali on Disciplining the Soul*," Yasien Mohamed presents a critical evaluation of Winter's translation

and study of chapters XXII and XXIII of Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī's *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. He finds that Winter's work is a significant contribution to English literature on Al-Ghazālī's ethics, both as a translation and as a scholarly study.

Murad Hofmann, in "Muslims As Co-citizens in the West . . . ," expects that with the continued communication and interaction of Muslim communities in the West with their countries of residence, Islam in Europe (and in America) might become part of what is considered "normal" sometime in the twenty-first century. The author then discusses the extent to which Muslims can integrate into Western culture without losing their identity.

Book reviews in this issue include eight recently published books on topics related to Islam and Muslims. By means of this section we hope to keep our readers aware of what is being published, thereby providing them with the means to follow up on what is presented in not only *AJISS* but other journals and publication catalogues.

Finally, twenty-nine dissertation abstracts are included in this issue (nine of them on education). Many of our readers have pointed out the importance of having a section that makes the latest academic research in fields related to Islam and Muslims known to university professors, their graduate students, and other researchers who can refer to such abstracts in their literature search, and make use of them in choosing research topics, formulating research questions, and interpreting research findings.