

EDITORIAL

Since its inception fourteen years ago, *AJISS* has built a considerable reputation as an academic Islamic journal. In addition to being a global forum for intellectual exchange between Muslim academicians from various disciplines, *AJISS* has contributed to efforts at Islamization of knowledge and the reorientation of Islamic thought. And while the *Journal* has made significant strides in reorienting Islamic thought, *AJISS* cannot be the sole provider of guidance for the Islamization of knowledge effort. Certainly, the necessary radical reorientation of knowledge will only occur with planned coordination with other academic activities, conferences, seminars, study circles, etc., and with the contributions of other individuals and communities of scholars from various parts of the world and academic disciplines.

From time to time, the *Journal* must stress the importance of Islamic epistemology as the framework for its academic efforts. In view of our ever-developing understanding of theoretical principles drawn from authentic sources, and also in view of developing issues and challenges, it is important to re-examine this framework to confirm that it is indeed appropriate. If the Islamic epistemology is functioning appropriately, it should define an Islamic methodology for research and inquiry in all topics and issues relevant to the *Journal*. All research articles should state its methodology, which should be consistent with our system of knowledge, as well as interpret results within its own framework by using the needed instruments and procedures for collecting and analyzing relevant data and evidence.

Although the *Journal* has dealt with these two themes, namely, epistemology and methodology, they still need to be defined definitively. Muslim scholars and researchers should not just refer to Islamic epistemology and Islamic methodology as a given or something known and understood; rather, they need to delve deep into the very heart of these matters to provide more in-depth and thought-provoking contributions. We understand that many of our Muslim scholars find themselves under the pressure of their practical circumstances when choosing their research topics. In the upcoming issues, God willing, the *Journal* will facilitate the endeavors of the authors to make their contributions more

meaningful. With the intent to improve *AJISS* and to develop its mission and vision, we welcome comments and suggestions from all our readers. We promise to study them very carefully and to make use of them.

All four of the 1997 issues of *AJISS* are dedicated to single themes. This issue is dedicated to "Islamic Law and *Ijtihād*." The theme is particularly crucial in light of the emerging body of scholarship that is seeking to divulge the essence and nature of the Islamic law.

This issue has three principle articles. First, Mehmet Paçacı has written "The Role of the Subject (*Mujtahid*) in al-Shafi'i's Methodology: A Hermeneutic Approach" in which he seeks to understand the nature of *ijtihad* as it was originally conceived. Second, Mohammad Hashim Kamali's article, "Islamic Commercial Law: An Analysis of Options" presents us with an empirical dimension of how the Shari'ah relates to options trading. Finally, an actual implementation of *ijtihad* in a case study is formulated by Shaykh Ṭāhā Jabir al-'Alwānī in his article, "The Role of Islamic *Ijtihād* in the Regulation and Correction of Capital Markets." All converge in the quest to further our understanding of where Islamic law has been, and where it has yet to go.

The editors at *AJISS* would like to take this opportunity to announce that the topic for the March 1998 Spring issue will be on psychology. We invite all contributions on the topic to be submitted to our office no later than December 15, 1997. We hope that you will take this opportunity to help develop the field of psychology, a field of social science to which *AJISS* has yet to apply more fully its Islamization mission.