

EDITORIAL

We report with great sadness the death of Victor Danner, a friend of Islam and Muslims, a graduate of Georgetown and Harvard, and Chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Danner's latest publication was *The Islamic Tradition: An Introduction*. We have been inviting Muslim and non-Muslim scholars from time to time to present their responses to the International Institute of Islamic Thought's call for the Islamization of Knowledge. So far, we have been very lucky to have had the opportunity to listen to the late Fazlur Rahman, Sayyed H. Nasr, Abdulaziz Sachedina and others who joined this debate at the IIIT headquarters. Some of these responses have been published in various issues of *AJISS*.

Victor Danner treated us to his response on May 15, 1989, when he presented his paper, which appears in this issue under the title of "Western Evolutionism in the Muslim World," at the IIIT headquarters. In this article, he launches an eloquent plea for the rediscovery and reexploration of the various schools of thought in Islam and their subsequent adaptation to the needs and circumstances faced by contemporary Muslims. He reminds us that past attempts at reform by Muslim intellectuals were based on a readaptation of the traditional techniques of Islam which, when presented in a fresh manner as a solution to the needs faced by their own contemporaries, gave the doctrine of *tawhīd* "a powerful radiance that had a convincing allure to it." This is followed by an examination of the origins of evolutionary thinking in the West, how its eventual acceptance and spread throughout the West ultimately displaced Christian beliefs and institutions on a massive scale, and how the resulting secular civilization produced by it is threatening to sweep aside and destroy traditional Islamic civilization. In closing, he states his hope that a better understanding of this phenomenon among the Muslim intelligentsia and the people at large will cause them to wake up to this danger and begin to work for the preservation of the "traditional culture of Islam."

Our first article in this issue is by Imaduddin Khalil, and addresses the Qur'an's relationship vis-à-vis modern science. After ruling out the Qur'an as a book or textbook of scientific knowledge, he proceeds to discuss the philosophy and aims of science and the basic principles of Islam. He begins with the role of humanity on earth as the *khalīfah* of Allah, moves on to the principles of *tawāzun* (balance) and *taskhīr* (an Islamic concept stating that the world and nature have been made subservient to humanity), and closes with the principle of a link between creation and the Creator. Khalil views the Qur'anic methodology as being a "methodology of discovery" of

the laws of the universe, and claims that the Qur'an stresses that a completely scientific attitude is to be used in the study of physical and metaphysical phenomenon, and that it categorically rejects everything that has a negative impact on this attitude.

The Qur'an reveals some facts and provides pointers to others. More important than this, however, is the Qur'an's assertion that the knowledge gained from the understanding of scientific facts, discoveries, and formulae must be used for the betterment of humanity. It is crucial that this be done, for the Qur'an forbids Muslims to withdraw from the usual processes of life, and from performing those deeds which it views as being utterly devoid of utilitarian value.

Mona Abul-Fadl has taken the opportunity to elaborate upon a theme which she had introduced in *AJISS* 7:1, namely the one on developing a Contrasting Episteme. She has taken the initiative by launching a discourse which seeks to understand Western civilization through a careful analysis of its philosophical foundations and a comparison with their Islamic counterparts. By selecting examples from both civilizations' popular culture and social theory, she has sought to pave the way for bridging the gulf which has long divided Islam and the West.

Ilyas Ba-Yunus has undertaken the task of developing an understanding of sociological realism based upon the concepts found in the Qur'an and then putting them together in order to create an Islamic paradigm of sociological realism. He seeks to reveal the Qur'anic insights into the nature of human action, the nature of human society, and the relationship between the two. Ba-Yunus thinks that the Islamic theoretical view of human action is basically indeterministic and that human beings are simultaneously self-centered and altruistic, a reflection of the function of the human will as a reflection of the dilemmatic nature of man.

The Muslim community in America and Canada has become a focus of many recent studies. In the past, Abdo Elholy and Ilyas Ba-Yunus have provided us with insightful studies of Muslim communities in America. In this issue, we have included a paper by Mazen Hashem which deals with the subject of assimilation on the cultural level. The author has used Gordon's model of assimilation to project an Islamic position regarding each stage of assimilation. He advocates an alternative process of assimilation on the level of extrinsic cultural traits, a procedure which applies six filtration procedures to the different kinds of American cultural artifacts. Hashem recommends a counterassimilation position on the level of intrinsic cultural traits. He defines the Islamic boundaries of identificational assimilation with respect to its ethnic, national, and racial components, a strategy aimed at establishing an Islamic melting pot.

Saddeka Arebi reviews studies on gender anthropology in the Middle

East. She argues that gender relations are inseparable from broader social concerns, and that Western feminists should realize that their premises concerning the "liberation" of women in the West have proven to be self-defeating in the eyes of many Muslim women, because such "liberation" only intensifies the many crises with which they must deal. Gender anthropology in Muslim societies, concludes Arebi, has to explicate the effect of the change in woman's position in terms of the change in gender relations within the family. For this, we have to develop a theory of gender which encompasses all facets of the Muslim woman's experience as opposed to one firmly rooted in Western feminist thought, be it liberal, Marxist, socialist, or radical feminist.

Zaidi Sattar shows that the literature on Islamic economics has yet to come up with a sufficient amount of research on behavioral relations governing investment in physical capital. His paper seeks to contribute to the building of an investment model within the framework of an integrated macroeconomic model. In his paper, he recognizes investment as a dynamic, rather than a static, behavior of the firm in question, thus making it necessary to invoke dynamic optimization procedures in order to derive the investment model based on the Islamic-ethical value system.

Under our Reflections section, we are publishing a paper by Ṭāhā J. al 'Alwānī entitled "Taqlid and Ijtihad." This is a revised version of Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo's English translation of the Arabic original. We are including this paper because we hope that the reflections of a *faqīh* on the crucial issues of taqlid and ijthad will be very useful for those of our social scientists who are involved in the Islamization of their disciplines. We hope to have a series of articles on this important issue in the future.

We have also included two review essays and four book reviews. Our 19th Annual Conference of the AMSS, held during October 1990, and the Third Islamic Economics Conference are reported on here, as are several sessions of the Middle East Studies Association's (MESA) 24th Annual Conference. The brief report on the Imām Tirmidhī conference which was recently held in the city of Tashkent is a reminder that the Muslim republics in the Soviet Union are very eager to join in the intellectual revival of the Muslim world.

In closing, we are glad to announce that the *AJISS* staff has completed a cumulative index of the first seven volumes of *AJISS*. It is our hope that our readers will take advantage of this new and very useful publication to locate those articles which will help them in their research. The subject matter has been arranged according to author's name, title of the paper, and subject. The staff will also supply interested parties with xerox copies of any previous article for a small fee. We offer these two new items to our readers in an attempt to meet the ever-growing demand, both at home and abroad, for earlier articles.