

## *Editorial*

This year AJISS turns twenty-five. In 1983, during a meeting of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists' (AMSS) executive board in Plainfield, Indiana, the pros and cons of establishing a journal were discussed in great detail and at length. The board members, Dr. Waheed Fakri (president), Dr. Sulayman S. Nyang (vice president), and Dawood Zwink (treasurer) agreed that the United States needed a Muslim-led and Muslim-organized scholarly publication to address important issues at home and abroad. In their vision, the journal would educate university and college students, as well as policymakers, with respect to the life and conditions of Muslims in the social sciences. In addition, the journal would be a vehicle for articulating and aggregating Muslim views and understanding of the social sciences.

Another objective was to provide a forum for Muslim scholars, and especially for those associated with the AMSS, to publish their research. At the time, it was felt that Muslim scholars engaged in social science research projects with an Islamic perspective found mainstream scholarly journals inhospitable. The board thought that the proposed journal would become – as it has – a forum for cutting-edge research in the social sciences and the humanities, employing both the standard social science research methodologies as well as the Islamic theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Two issues were critical: (1) obtaining the financial resources needed to sustain the proposed journal and (2) its viability and effectiveness. After the go-ahead decision had been taken, and in order to establish the journal, the board members drew upon the intellect and services of AMSS members as well as friends and sympathizers. With this in mind, Dr. Mumtaz Ahmad, a respected and active AMSS member and friend of Dr. Nyang, was proposed as the journal's co-editor. Dr. Nyang became the editor-in-chief and Dr. Ahmad, a former editor of a scholarly journal in Pakistan, became the editor. Several prominent Muslims were invited to serve on the advisory board to widen the circle of involvement.

Their hard work came to fruition in 1984, when the first issue of the *American Journal of Islamic Studies* (AJIS) was published. For the first couple of years, the headquarters of the AJIS was located in the briefcases of Drs. Nyang and Ahmad. The editorial board meetings were held around their

dining tables and occasionally in the lounge of the Dupont Plaza Hotel in the Dupont Circle area of Washington, DC. They would meet on weekends at dinner (alternatively at each other's home), write letters to prospective contributors, do the initial review, forward the suitable ones to referees, correct the proofs, compile the mailing list, and do other editorial and clerical work. Most of the time they would finish past midnight, and then one of them would rush over to Br. Fakhri Al-Barzinji's International Graphics Press with the corrected proofs, often pleading with him to deliver the journal on time but to wait for the check for another month. They received very encouraging feedback on the first two issues from their peers, and were quite excited that the experiment was bearing fruit.

Due to a change in financial sponsorship, which helped establish the journal's long-term financial viability, in 1987 it was renamed the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (AJISS) and gained new editorial board members. Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, then president of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), was elected AMSS president and became the journal's editor-in-chief. Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, at that time IIIT's academic director, was entrusted with the editorial duties. Other editorial staff members were also hired.

The transition from AJIS to AJISS was the result of Dr. AbuSulayman's, Dr. Syeed's, and IIIT's attempt to give the journal a more Islamo-centric perspective based upon the ideas of Dr. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, a co-founder of AMSS. Thus, it reflected the understanding that the journal, now housed within IIIT's headquarters, would make a significant contribution to the development and articulation of the ideas propounded by Islamic social science. This was in keeping with IIIT's long-standing belief in the Islamization of knowledge. One noticeable change in the journal's editorials was the innovative Islamic injection that Dr. AbuSulayman added to its character.

Not all original board members were persuaded by the rationales behind the name change. There was some concern that it implied that "Islamic social science" is already an accomplished fact, whereas these members considered it to be a work in progress. In addition, there was an apprehension that the new title would restrict the journal's coverage to social sciences and that scholars of humanities would feel discouraged from submitting their work. However, after three years it was understood that financial viability ruled the day. Since the journal was now financially secure and all of the steps needed to secure a name and a place in the academy were now evident to the journal's editors and the AMSS membership, it was decided to continue the financial relationship with IIIT while leaving the editorial

duties in the hands of the editors. What was remarkable about the journal, both then as well as now, was its vision for Muslims in the academy.

Over the years, the attempt to realize the goals of the journal's founders has taken the form of articles and book reviews contributed by both recognized and young scholars who write for the journal. Certainly, a growing body of knowledge has developed from the research works of Muslims and non-Muslims interested in Muslim perspectives on the social sciences.

In conclusion, three points deserve attention: (1) the driving spirit that inspired and galvanized the founders to create such a journal, (2) the win-win relationship of IIIT and AMSS, which has kept the journal growing without necessarily compromising its relevance and scholarly credibility, and (3) the great deal of credit that should be given to the leadership of Dr. Waheed Fakri and his board for their bold decision to undertake this task. Similarly, the countless hours expended by Dr. Ahmad to recruit Muslim and non-Muslim contributors added a great weight to the collaborative nature of his relationship with the founding editor-in-chief, Dr. Nyang. Thus twenty-five years on and after a succession of dedicated editors, AJIS/AJISS has every right to be proud of its consistent track record of serving as a forum for bringing Muslim perspectives to bear on contemporary issues facing Muslims, and indeed the world, today. Recording the history of such American Muslim social, intellectual, and political associations as AMSS/AJISS is crucial, for the resulting track record helps to anchor Muslims in the historical social fabric of American society. (Many thanks to Dr. Sulayman Nyang, Dr. Mumtaz Ahmad, and Layla Sein for contributing to this brief history.)

With this celebratory year, we are pleased to announce the journal's new editorial structure. A new team of experts, all of whom are committed to AJISS' continued success, have honored us by agreeing to serve as associate editors. First, I would like to thank the outgoing board members for their invaluable contribution to AJISS' growth and development. We pray that God will reward you and your families with success in this life and the next. I would now like to introduce the new associate editors: Dr. Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad, Dr. Mehmet Asutay, Dr. Marcia Hermansen, Dr. Haifaa Jawad, and Dr. Ahmad Yousif. As you will see from the short biographies at the end of the editorial, their combined expertise represents a wealth of information for AJISS to tap. We welcome them and wish them well in this new venture.

It is also fitting that in this anniversary year we share with our readers the achievements of one of AJISS' strongest supporters: Dr. Jamal Barzinji (vice president, IIIT). In June 2007, Dr. Barzinji accepted the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy's (ICRD) first "Faith in Action" award

at a dinner in Georgetown. The ICRD, founded in 2000, aims “to promote conflict resolution around the globe using common threads in religion.” They have ongoing projects in Sudan, Kashmir, Pakistan, and Iran. The award is meant to distinguish those “exceptional individuals who increase religious understanding in a way that enables others to see the ‘spark of the divine’ in their fellow human beings.”

The ICRD chose Dr. Barzinji for “his work in enhancing Islamic thought around the world to accommodate the challenges of modernity.” Dr. Anwar Ibrahim (former deputy prime minister of Malaysia) spoke on his long friendship with Dr. Barzinji, and Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), the first-ever Muslim congressman, gave the keynote address. In his acceptance speech Dr. Barzinji said:

Allow me to tell you how greatly and deeply honored I am to accept this award as a trustee of IIIT, and on behalf of IIIT, its Board of Trustees, my colleagues here in the US, and those spread across the globe, without whom none of our work would have been possible. IIIT works for a mission of reform of Thought and Education, aspiring to use the power of faith and ideas to generate social transformation in a culture of moderation, tolerance and understanding. Prophet Muhammed teaches us: faith is “that which is established in the heart and verified through action.” Among the men who put their faith in action and gave up their lives for it are Malcom X who said “A man who stands for nothing, will fall for any thing.” A man who stood for his faith was the reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., who once referred to “a creative battle to end the long night of injustice.” Faith in Action is this creative battle; that gives us the hope that “something extraordinary can always happen in our lives.” And it appears to be extraordinary to end extremism and terrorism, to root out intolerance, to bring balance to our foreign policy, to abolish bigotry, and to restore respect and honor for our civil and Constitutional rights. We must put our faith into action for peace, peace at home and around the world. It is with this resolve, that I accept this award. ([muslimlinkpaper.com/mybo2/index2.php?option=com\\_content&do\\_pdf=1&id=1022](http://muslimlinkpaper.com/mybo2/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1022).)

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In this issue, our first article echoes Dr Barzinji’s above-mentioned sentiments by focusing on the role played by language in a conflict, specifically how it can be used to alienate and contribute to hatred on both sides. Ahmad Shehu Abdussalam’s “Intra-Muslim Conflicts: A Linguistic Representation” investigates this phenomenon and concludes that while negativity expressed through language contributes to conflict, the opposite is also true, for conflicts can be ameliorated (along with other conditions) via a more positive linguistic representation of the other side. This conclusion, while seemingly

self-evident, appears to be a lesson that people find exceedingly difficult to follow: witness the negative effects that *Islamofacism* has had on the Muslim world and the concomitant rise in anti-American/western sentiment.

Our next piece investigates how Shi`i jurists have interpreted the concept of *bada* (the idea that God alters His own decrees) over time. Cemil Hakyemez's "*Bada* and Its Role in the Debates over Shi`i Doctrine" concludes that over time, jurists settled on an understanding of *bada* that gave precedence to a rational interpretation of the doctrine over other possible interpretations. H. A. Hellyer's "Muslims in Europe: Precedent and Present" reminds us of the historical interconnections between Muslims and Europe as way to emphasize the wrongheadedness as well as the dangers of the current alienation of Muslims engendered by specific European and American actions and policies.

Given the rise of embezzlement in the white-collar sector over the past decade, scholars have turned their attention to religious institutions. Since most of resulting literature has focused on the church, Maliah Sulaiman, Siti Alawiah Siraj, and Shahul Hameed Mohamed Ibrahim decided to investigate the situation in state mosques in West Malaysia. Their study, "Internal Control Systems in West Malaysia's State Mosques," concludes that the state mosques "have a strong internal control system pertaining to the receipt of income and disbursement of funds."

Our article section closes with a detailed examination of the legal, political, economic, and spiritual origins and teachings of human rights in Islam in order to show the common identity of classical American and classical Islamic thought so that Muslims, Christians, and Jews can unite against religious extremism. This article is a response to what Robert Dickson Crane believes is a new strategy to single out Islam's essential values, deny that they exist, and assert that their absence constitutes the Islamic threat.

In our forum section, we feature Dr. Sulayman Nyang's inaugural editorial for the *American Journal of Islamic Studies*. Despite the passage of twenty-five years and the comings and goings of key personnel, the ideas and the vision contained therein remain just as valid today as they were then.

Finally, it is with sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Ilyas Ba-Yunus, a pillar of the North American Muslim community and a past president of AMSS. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*. We pray that God will forgive his sins, grant him Paradise, and give his family patience during their time of loss. His son, Asad Bayunus, has graciously allowed us to publish the obituary he wrote for his father.

## **Ilyas Ba-Yunus: A Muslim American Sociologist 1932-2007**

Dr. Ilyas Ba-Yunus, a pioneering Muslim American sociologist, a founding member of MSA and the first president of ISNA, passed away on Oct. 5 in Miami, FL. A pioneer of the Muslim American community and an advocate for protecting the Muslim family and community, he was honored with the ISNA Community Service Recognition Award in 2006. An American flag was flown in his honor at the United States Capitol. Ba-Yunus, born in Aurangabad, Hyderabad (a state occupied by India in 1948), was a 1960 Fulbright scholar at the University of Minnesota, where he completed an MA in geography. He then went on to earn an MA in sociology (University of Illinois) and a Ph.D. in sociology (Oklahoma State University). Over the years, he established standards for studying Muslim Americans.

An active member of the University of Minnesota's Muslim association right after his arrival, he recalled for "Islamic Horizons" in 2003 how the MSA was founded: "It was a stormy and icy morning, the first day of January 1963, when change came for the Muslim American community. The Muslim student group – at that time the Islamic Cultural Society – at the University of Minnesota had just received an invitation from the Muslim Student Association of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) – another of the few Muslim student groups scattered across the nation at the time – asking us to join an effort to form a national organization of Muslim students in the U.S. and Canada. It would be called 'the MSA' – Muslim Students Association. Along with 13 other local Muslim student organizations from around the country, we answered the challenge."

Ba-Yunus spent nearly all of his free time working for MSA, traveling to various campuses, lecturing and organizing programs nationwide. In 1969, he was elected MSA vice president, but soon had to assume the presidency when the then-president was debilitated in an auto accident.

After completing his Ph.D., Ba-Yunus began teaching at Bradley University. Among his proposals and projects was a report advocating the establishment of a community-based organization to succeed MSA, as more Muslim students were finishing their studies and settling in North America. Out of this discussion came the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), an umbrella organization consisting of the MSA, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, the Islamic Medical Association, and other Muslim organizations.

In 1972, Ba-Yunus settled into his career, teaching at the State University of New York at Cortland as a tenured professor until his retirement in 2003. He dedicated his scholarship to his chosen field of Islamic Sociology, often drawing parallels between Ibn Taymiyya, who was from the Hadramaut province of Yemen, and himself, who's grandfather was also from Hadramaut. He was a part of the fabric of AMSS, not only from its inception, but also as its president from 1975-1976. It was through AMSS and East-West University that Dr. Ba-Yunus began and introduced his thorough study of Muslims in America, calculating the most authoritative estimate of the Muslim population in the United States as well as the demographic and religious tendencies of the Muslim populus.

His scholarship and hard work also drew the attention of then Pakistan's President, General Zia Ul Haq, who often called him to Islamabad to discuss issues of national and international importance. General Zia also asked Dr. Ba-Yunus to serve as Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran just prior to the Iranian revolution, but due to the development of ISNA in the United States at the same time, he declined the offer to allow him to participate in our community.

As ISNA's first president (1983-85), he oversaw the organization's earliest growth and formative periods while living at the headquarters in Plainfield, IN. Since then, he served on its Majlis al-Shura board in various capacities, most recently as the chairman of the Islamic Media Foundation (IMF). He also started the ISNA Matrimonial Referral Service, which emerged directly out of his research on divorce among the Muslim community in North America.

Many of Ba-Yunus' research and publications focused on the demographics and sociology of Muslims in North America. In 1989, he helped develop the curriculum of the International Islamic University (IIU) in Malaysia. He also traveled to Turkey numerous times to discuss his writings on Islamic sociology. During his career, he wrote six books; was published in several others; and contributed to numerous publications, journals, and magazines, among them "Islamic Horizons." His most recent book, *Muslims in the United States* (Greenwood Press: 2006), was co-authored with Kassim Kone. His most recent achievement was the formation of the ISNA House of Community Representatives, a body meant to increase the direct participation of affiliated Muslim communities in the ISNA Majlis al-Shura.

He is survived by Sayeda, his wife of thirty-nine years, his son Asad, and his two-year old granddaughter Hafsaah.

## Biographies of the New Assistant Editors

**IMAD-AD-DEAN AHMAD, PH.D.:** Dr. Ahmad graduated *cum laude* from Harvard in 1970 and went on to obtain a Ph.D. in astronomy and astrophysics from the University of Arizona (1975). Currently president of the Minaret of Freedom Institute, an Islamic think-tank in Metropolitan Washington, DC, he is an internationally sought-after speaker on matters relating to Islam and Muslims. In addition, he is an author and teaches courses at the University of Maryland (religion and progress; religion, science, and freedom) and at Georgetown University's Center on Muslim-Christian Understanding (Islam, science, and development).

**MEHMET ASUTAY, PH.D.:** Dr. Asutay earned his Ph.D. in political economics from the University of Leicester. Before moving to Durham University, he was a lecturer in economics and social theory at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education (affiliated to Loughborough University), where he taught international development and finance, quantitative methods, cross-cultural management, and research methodology in social sciences. His research interests are political economy; public choice; institutional economics; devel-

opment economics; international finance; the political economy of Turkey and the Middle East; and Islamic economics, finance, and management. He has numerous publications and conferences presentations to his credit.

**MARCIA HERMANSEN, PH.D.:** In her capacity as a professor of theology and director of the Islamic World Studies program at Loyola University (Chicago), Dr. Hermansen teaches courses in Islamic studies and religious studies. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in Arabic and Islamic studies. During her research and language training, she lived for extended periods in Egypt, Jordan, India, Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan. She conducts research in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish as well as in major European languages. Her book, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, a study and translation (from Arabic) of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi's *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, was published in 1996. She is co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (2003) and over the years has contributed numerous academic articles in the fields of Islamic thought, Sufism, Islam and Muslims in South Asia, Muslims in America, and women and gender in Islam.

**HAIFAA JAWAD PH.D.:** Dr. Jawad, B.A. and M.A. (Baghdad University), Ph.D. (Exeter University) is senior lecturer in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham. She specializes in the socio-political study of Islam; modern Islamic thought; contemporary Islamic issues; Islamic spirituality; Islamic ethics; Christian, Jewish, and Muslim relations; Euro-Arab relations; Middle East politics; Islam and the West; Islam and democracy; women's issues in Islam; and feminism and Islam. Among her many publications are "Female Conversion to Islam: The Sufi Paradigm," in K. Nieuwkerk (ed.), *Women Embracing Islam: Gender and Conversion in the West* (Texas University Press: 2006) and "Islam and Democracy in the 21st Century," in Gabriele Marranci (ed.), *Muslims, Globalisation, and Secularism* (Springer: forthcoming).

**AHMAD YOUSIF, PH.D.:** Dr. Yousif is currently teaching at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. He teaches courses on classical and contemporary Islam, including "Muslims in Canada." The author of four books and numerous articles published in scholarly journals, Yousif is an active participant in both national and international academic gatherings. As a professor of Islamic studies, he is widely credited with having pioneered the research areas on Muslims in Canada, Islam in Southeast Asia, religious minorities, and world religions.

Katherine Bullock  
Editor, AJISS and Vice President, AMSS