

Editorial

Man's physical and intellectual life has become too complicated and diversified for a single individual to internalize, however knowledgeable he or she may be. Hence, *ijtihād* and renewal are no longer a mission reserved exclusively for a *mujtahid*, 'ālim, or a leader as was traditionally the case a few centuries ago.

Historically speaking, more than a hundred years ago, this demanding reality of human life was recognized by the Ottomans. Rather than following the established traditions of placing the responsibilities of legislation in the hands of a grand *mujtahid*, a broad committee of 'ulama, statesmen, and public figures was set up to take charge of codifying the Ḥanafī school of *fiqh* (known as the *Majalla*). It is therefore the responsibility of scientists, 'ulama, philosophers, and, above all, social scientists to play a significant role in the ongoing movement of Islamic renewal.

Yet the intellectual renewal of a nation can only be set on foot with a critique of dominant norms, paradigms, and ideals, whether of intrinsic roots or of foreign origins. Indeed, it is through a comprehensive and constructive critical insights that society will be able to develop a new and invigorating worldview. This is the starting point and common denominator shared by most articles of this issue of *AJISS*.

Mona M. Abul-Fadl proposes an extensive and profound analysis of contemporary social theory. Her goal is to illustrate its misrepresentation of the human venture and to lay the foundation for an Islamic perspective of social theory. Similarly, though on a smaller scale, Abdulwahab al Masseri reflects on the common roots of imperialism, secularism, and the dominant western epistemological outlook. Challenging decaying ideals of other categories, Tāhā J. al 'Alwānī presents a detailed reformulation on the rights of the accused in a typical Islamic judicial system. By drawing on primary Islamic texts and classical *fiqh* sources, his work epitomizes that of a contemporary *faqīh* vis-à-vis contemporary issues. Suha Taji-Farouki's article is in contrast with that of al 'Alwānī. Here, a social scientist attempts to deconstruct a modern *faqīh*'s (al Nabhānī)

reading of the canonical sources of Islam (the Qur'an, hadith, and *sīrah*). This, of course, is a necessary step toward understanding the intricacies, shortcomings, and richness of contemporary Islamic political thought.

Our readers will not fail to notice Ibrahim Abu-Rabi's review article. It is now our goal to expand our book review section. *AJISS*, therefore, is welcoming more contributions to this section, especially those articles dealing with several related books or scholarly publications of a certain field of Islamic studies.

We would also like to remind our contributors of an essential requirement, namely, properly documenting their research papers. Papers must adhere to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and all consulted sources must be indicated in full (author, name, title, city and date of publication, publisher, and exact page numbers). It is very time-consuming for *AJISS* staff as well as for authors to halt publication procedures of a certain paper so that such bibliographical requirements may be fulfilled. Please submit all contributions on diskette using either WordPerfect 5.1 for Windows (IBM) or MicroSoft Word (MacIntosh), if possible.

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