

**Letter from the Editor-in-Chief  
An Introduction to the Journal**

The *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice* is a new, online, double-blind, peer reviewed, interdisciplinary journal published by Indiana University and sponsored by the Islamic Seminary Foundation (ISF). Produced annually, this journal commits itself to promoting academic and professional research about recent developments in American Muslim communities. In doing so, the *Journal* aims to provide a platform for scholars, students, and researchers to exchange their latest findings from varied disciplines. Therefore, one of the key aims of the *Journal* is to foster dialogue between academics, researchers, community leaders, chaplains and students regarding Islamic faith and how it is practiced in America. The *Journal* will be in an open-access format with print on demand available at Amazon.com.

American Muslims are a diverse group in terms of religiosity, culture, race, ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic background. Consequently, this population is of great interest to scholars, researchers, activists, journalists, and policy makers in the United States. This has led to numerous published studies about American Muslims over recent decades. This particular publication is part of ISF's overall effort to build bridges between the Islamic intellectual tradition and Western scholarship.

As Editor-in-Chief, I am pleased to introduce this inaugural issue. This journal has been nearly three years in the making. It is a natural outgrowth of ISF's "Shura and In-service Training Conference for Chaplains, Imams and Other Service Providers to the Muslim Community" held annually at Yale University since 2011, co-sponsored with the Association of Muslim Chaplains and the Muslim Endorsement Council of Connecticut. ISF decided that a dedicated journal would be the ideal vehicle to build on the success of the conference while capturing the diverse scholarly interests of an ever more vibrant American Muslim community. This inaugural issue outlines important themes and universal concepts that cut across disciplines.

This inaugural issue consists of three articles by highly esteemed scholars covering critical issues concerning Islamic faith and practice in America. In "*Al-wahda al-bina'iyya li-l-Qur'an: A Methodology for Understanding the Qur'an in the Modern Day*," I argue by using the example of apostasy in Islam, that the Qur'anic methodology of *al-wahda al-bina'iyya li-l-Qur'an* is essential for enhancing and advancing religious scholarship. The article asserts that this method provides an important hermeneutic resolution to critical debates surrounding Islam's moral and ethical framework. "Islam and the American Common Good," by Dr. Sherman A. Jackson articulates how Muslims can partake in the American "common good" in a way that is authentically grounded in Islam and is not merely a facile attempt to prove loyalty to the American state in a post 9/11 world. In "Governance Issues in American Mosques: Exploring the Present and Making Recommendations for the Future," Dr. Ihsan Bagby explores the existing organizational structures of mosques in the United States and offers recommendations on how mosque leaders can improve their organizational structure. The three articles, while they span three different topics, are bound by one unifying thread: that of modern American contextuality in understanding Islamic faith and practice.

Our inaugural issue also contains a short article by Dr. Jimmy E. Jones and Dr. Sabith Khan's book review of Kambiz GhaneaBassiri's *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to*

*the New World Order*. Two reports on different conferences are also included along with a final testimony by the late American Muslim scholar, Dr. Taha Jabir al-Alwani.

Looking ahead to our second issue scheduled for March 2019, we welcome submissions discussing and analyzing issues related to the theme “Islamic Ethics in the American Context.” The aim of this volume is to synthesize and advance both theoretical and empirical research about Islamic ethics within various disciplines. The *Journal* invites high-quality original research as well as critical dialogue and discussion papers focused on the relationship between ethics and Islamic faith and practice in America. In addition, we invite insightful reviews and abstracts of published books of interest and unpublished PhD dissertations and Master’s theses of interest to our subscribers as well as conference reports.

This issue would not have been possible without the hard work of people too numerous to name. To them I express my heartfelt gratitude. I would also like to express particular gratitude for the support and assistance from Dr. Jimmy E. Jones, Dr. Shariq Siddiqui, and Rafia Khader who have generously given their time and expertise to make this project happen. I would also like to thank the members of the Editorial Board and the authors for their invaluable contributions to this inaugural issue.

Sincerely,

Zainab Alwani  
Editor-in-Chief