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Editor's Foreword

We are pleased to release a new issue of Tajseer magazine, which is moving steadily towards the end of the seventh volume. We are also pleased that a group of professors and researchers have responded to us, and we gratefully received a range of theoretical and experimental papers, all of which are in line with interdisciplinary studies – whether in terms of overlapping and multiplicity of approaches, or in terms of the intersection and interaction of disciplines. We begin this issue with an in-depth study of the cautious overlap between the texts of the Qur'an and the natural sciences. Those who follow the developments of scientific research will not find it difficult to notice that there is a clear turn towards Qur'anic studies – whether in Arab or Western universities. But the most important observation is that modern experimental physicists have begun to compete with linguists and anthropologists in showing interest in the Qur'anic text. It is in this context that what is known as the scientific interpretation of the Qur'an has emerged, where its authors seek to bridge the gap between the sciences of revelation and the natural sciences.

Since (Tajseer) pays special attention to the overlap between scientific disciplines - both in terms of methodology and content - it opens this issue with a distinguished paper in which Professor Shaima Foukhri deals with the method of the scientific interpretation of the Qur'an. She attempts to provide a critical evaluation of this method, questioning its methodological efficiency and scientific feasibility and to see whether it represents a process that starts from the Qur'anic text and moves towards the natural sciences, or starts from the natural sciences and ends with the Qur'anic text - which leads to the elevation of the importance of the natural sciences, giving it the status of centrality and authority over the Qur'anic text. This latter process is completely different, in her opinion, from the original interpretive function. She notes that the process "bridging" is only a methodological tool that acquires its identity from the prevailing circumstantial context, and that Islamic thought has witnessed various forms of "bridging" that reflected the needs of the ummah – from proving the existence of the Creator to defending the identity of the ummah. She concludes that the "bridging" that we need today is a bridge from the Qur'an to the natural sciences, which she refers to as "bridging between the jurisprudence of the destination (figh al-wujhah) – which comes from the Qur'an – and the natural sciences that originate in the universe."

In a related context, Professor Ismail Nouri addresses a topic related to what he calls the "intellectual project of "Occidentalism", i.e., the study of the West from a non-Western perspective, going on to say that the Occidentalism which he refers to is not just the flip of the stereotype of Orientalism but it is an altogether different epistemological frame of reference that explores how the Western scholar perceives issues of power, identity, and cultural difference. He then wonders how the West can be studied as historical, social, and cultural entity? Can it, for instance, be subjected to the same standards and forms of analysis that the West itself has developed for the study of non-Western societies? To answer these questions, the researcher relies on the methods of the history of ideas,

cultural studies, and discourse analysis. He concludes that through this approach, researchers from non-Western societies have been able to study the West, using multiple lenses that have proven to be useful in delegitimizing many Western concepts and categories. He contends that Occidentalism contributes to the displacement of Eurocentrism from the position of domination in the Humanities and social sciences for a long time, as well as removing the prevailing assumption that the well-established concepts entrenched in Western academic disciplines – such as rationality, democracy, modernity, and secularism – are universal in nature, thus concealing the particular circumstances that gave rise to them.

And whereas the previous topic deals with the study of the West from the outside, and focuses on the critical reviews conducted by non-Western researchers, the third paper that follows it (by Professor Ahmed Ali Salem) seeks to study the West from within. He addresses the revisions conducted by Western researchers themselves, as well as the sectarian and methodological differences and divisions that occurred among them. His aim here is to detect a possible interrelationship. Generally speaking, Professor Ahmed's study aims to analyze the major schisms and revisions among the major schools in the field of international relations over the course of a century. He focuses mainly on realism and social constructivism, concluding that the process of bridging these schools closer is possible and necessary for solving their dilemmas while maintaining their different philosophical foundations. Unfortunately, this process of integrating various positions and visions counters both the advocates of theoretical purity who deny the possibility of rapprochement between schools, as well as the advocates of the preservation of pluralism who reject all attempts of integrating different schools of thought.

Also, in a similar paper entitled “Neuroscience and Sociology”, Professor Ali Jafari discusses the possibility of bridging together two apparently different academic fields. He highlighted the conceptual process that emerged in 1972 and led to the birth of the theory of “social neuroscience”. That process had, however, declined; particularly so when sociologists rushed to vigorously defend their specialization. The bridging process between the two fields did not regain its strength until the early 1990s with the emergence of the so-called “neuro-social sciences”. With the American and European interest in this field of science, and with the provision of financial and human resources for researchers in it, neuro-social science gained its final prominence. In conclusion, Professor Jafari points to the most important criticisms directed at neuroscience, such as disconnecting the individual from society, looking at the individual as a brain entity only, working on the application of laboratory experiments to society, and the possibility of using social neuroscience to control and manipulate individuals and societies.

In a slightly similar neuro-social science perspective, this issue includes two papers on cultural heritage. It looks into cultural reproduction and its employment in ways that meet the needs of society and state. In the first paper, Professor Adi Al-Bashir examines the issue of employing cultural symbols in public policies. By public policies he refers to the processes of mobilizing-by the power of the state- a set of cultural symbols so as to influence the emotions, representations, and behaviors of the citizens.

Symbolism is usually reflected in the names of streets, public squares, treads and various public facilities, which in some way express the state's ideology and cultural preferences. In the second paper entitled: "Diving is a Culture that still breathes", Professor Muthanna Al-Masri addresses the ways in which the various heritage and historical loads and connotations of the pearl diving community in Doha are manifested. The Doha city, in his view, does not represent a mere physical structure; it represents a cultural text through which the relationship between history, identity, and national politics is reformulated – in a constant attempt to produce a city that carries a Qatari specificity that is open to the world without separating from its roots. Moreover, he emphasizes that architecture in Qatar has a clear symbolic and cultural function, and that the state uses it as a heritage symbol that can be reclaimed.

In addition to these highly theoretical papers, the issue includes a study Examining the impact of transnational pandemics on the attitudes and behavior of Moroccan youth from three different regions of the country. Professor Abdelkhaleq Sedati, who conducted the research, carefully provided a theoretical framework of the study and its problem, described his sample, and presented his findings- using many tables and drawings. His conclusion is that a final battle against the epidemic requires a comprehensive societal and scientific mobilization, in which sociologists, psychologists, media, health workers, economics, and decision-makers in society must come together.

As usual, the issue includes two book reviews, the first one deals with misinformation and how to build immunity against it, and the other focuses on legal sociology. This is in addition to a report on the regular activities of Ibn Khaldoon Center in the previous period.

To conclude, I would like to thank those professors who have provided this valuable material, as well as the external reviewers whose suggestions had the greatest impact on enhancing our work. Our thanks go to the working team at Qatar University Press, without whose efforts and continuous follow-up, this issue would not have come out in this elaborate picture

On the personal level, and with the coming out of this Tajseer issue, I myself will bow out thankfully as an Editor-in-Chief. The Journal would certainly grow stronger and expand widely under the new editor. I wish him all the best.

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