

## EDITORIAL

### A Problem of Methodology in Islamic Studies

The State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN, *al-Jāmi'ah al-Islāmiyyah al-Hukūmiyyah*) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta-Indonesia has been established more than thirty five years. A lot of its alumni has been produced whose contributions to the national development, namely human resources involving various activities, is beyond doubt. Yet, some fundamental questions concerning the existence of the IAIN are not fully answered. To mention one example, quite a number of people have continuously questioned the existence of the IAIN whether as an academic institution (*lembaga ilmiah*), religious institution (*lembaga agama atau da'wah*) or even a combination of both. The influence of Western approach in Islamic studies makes the problem more serious; for Western approach, in general, tends to view any aspect of human life scientifically which mostly, if not all, out of religious consideration (*revelation*). In the words of Pierre L. van den Berghe, "At the very least many of those who admit that purity of science may indeed be contaminated by the virus of ideology nevertheless believe that infection is avoidable and that science can be value-free." This, indeed, is quite different from the traditional viewpoint of Muslim society in which ideology based on the revelation of God (*wahy*) is very important and consequently normative--and deductive--approach becomes very dominant in their study.

Such a problem is of course concerned with many aspects, among them being the problem of methodology in studying Islam, a problem which becomes a more serious issue among those people of the IAIN or Muslims in general. In fact, some efforts have been proposed to deal with such a problem through various means and activities such as a modification of curriculum and workshops on the subject. The 1997 curriculum of the IAIN, for instance, gives more attention to the issue through a new course called *metodologi studi Islam* (methodology in Islamic studies). A workshop on approaches to Islam has also been held in the last week of May 1998. Certainly it is in this context, namely on the problem of methodology in Islamic teaching, that this volume of *AL-JĀMI'AH* is published.

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It should be mentioned, however, that this is a new step to develop the *AL-JAMI'AH* by providing certain topics for each publication and the topics of this volume is concerned with the problem of methodology in studying Islam as mentioned earlier. Some articles such as those by M. Atho Mudzhar, Amin Abdullah, Kunto Wijoyo, Shofiullah, and Syarif Hidayatullah certainly outline and, at the same time, discuss some points on the topics. We have acknowledged that most of the articles are not directly concerned with the problem of methodology; nonetheless, they are in some ways and another deal with the application of certain methods in studying Islam, and that they are hopefully enrich our views concerning the methodology of Islamic teaching.

Last but not least, many volumes of *AL-JĀMI'AH* in Indonesian language have been published; nonetheless, this volume is only the third publication as an international journal in three languages (Indonesian, Arabic, and English). Thus, some modifications are always needed to develop the Journal and that any suggestion is welcome.

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