Stating the problem under discussion as "Islam and Science" is false because this formulation implies that there is such a thing as a reified and ahistorical and hence immutable "Islam" that is responsible for advancing or impeding scientific activity, both past and present. In fact, Islam, like all other religions, is the specific ideology of a particular, historically determined society (i.e., Islam in Baghdad in the 830s, in Damascus in 1300, in Cairo around 1000, etc.) and has itself no historical agency; what that particular society accomplishes in the way of science wholly depends on who is using that ideology (if it is being used) and to what ends. The analysis of scientific activity in Islamic societies, therefore, can proceed only from the investigation of the social and political factors at play in each particular case. Injecting the notion of "Islam" into these discussions merely obfuscates the issue and confuses students, distracting them from historical analysis and political action.

*Keywords*: Islam and Science; problem of formulation of relationship; Islamic tradition; normative practice; early history of Islam.

The problem that this journal is established to discuss with the hope that eventually some solutions may emerge, is stated in terms which themselves are part of the problem. The expression “Islam and Science” contains two terms, each of which, unless there are further qualifications—and there usually aren’t—is taken to represent a self-contained and essential entity, and the implied question (made explicit in the editor’s