



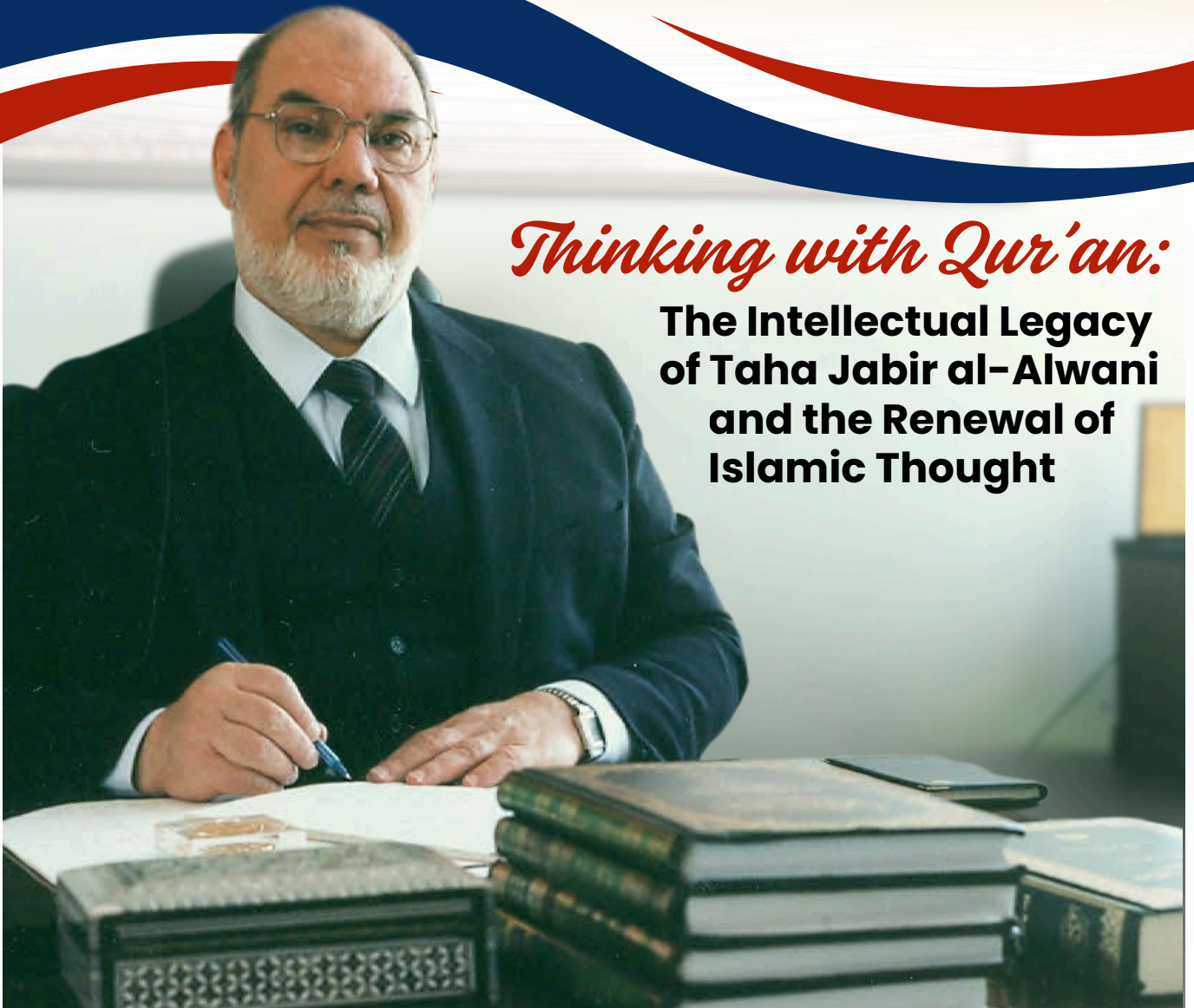
IIIT Students' *Magazine*



Volume 3, Issue no: 1

Ramadan and the Purification of the Heart:

**A Student's Guide to Seizing the Month of
Change in a Diverse World**



Thinking with Qur'an:

**The Intellectual Legacy
of Taha Jabir al-Alwani
and the Renewal of
Islamic Thought**

Sixth Edition, 2026
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Editorial Message



Prof. Dr. Dawood A.Y. Al-Hidabi
*Chief Editor, Coordinator & Advisor,
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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

**In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful,
the Most Compassionate**

Dear Students, Scholars, and Readers,

It gives me profound joy to witness the publication of the 6th IIIT–IIUM Students Magazine, a platform that reflects not merely student activity, but the intellectual pulse of a generation seeking meaning, coherence, and purpose in an increasingly fragmented world.

This issue arrives at a time when the Muslim ummah faces not only political and social challenges, but deeper epistemological questions: How do we think? How do we learn? How do we remain faithful to revelation while engaging the realities of our time? These are not abstract concerns; they shape the very direction of our institutions, our scholarship, and our lives.

The contributions in this magazine beautifully reflect this intellectual seriousness. In the reflection on marital harmony, we see how Islamic jurisprudence is not a rigid technical system, but a moral framework designed to preserve dignity, stability, and mercy within the family. In the student reflection on Ramadan, we are reminded that academic excellence without purification of the heart produces imbalance. Knowledge must be accompanied by sincerity (ikhlāṣ), discipline, and consciousness of Allah.

The article on the intellectual legacy of Taha Jabir al-Alwani highlights a matter that is central to IIIT's mission: the renewal (tajdīd) of Islamic thought through the re-centering of the Qur'an as the primary epistemological authority. Al-Alwani did not call for abandonment of tradition nor surrender to modernity; rather, he insisted on disciplined thinking with the Qur'an, restoring coherence between revelation, reason, and lived reality.

This approach resonates deeply with the educational vision derived from Qur'anic guidance. As reflected in the educational meditation on Surah Al-Zumar (53–55), the Qur'an offers a pedagogy of hope, responsibility, and reform. It rejects despair while demanding accountability. It affirms dignity while guiding transformation. Such balance must define our academic culture: rigorous yet compassionate, principled yet adaptive.

The narratives of student journeys further illustrate that excellence is not accidental. It emerges from discipline, mentorship, intellectual humility, and sincere engagement with knowledge as an amānah (trust). When IIIT and IIUM collaborate, we do not merely produce graduates; we cultivate morally anchored thinkers capable of serving humanity with wisdom and integrity.

The reformist vision of Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi reminds us that civilisational renewal begins with moral reform at the -

foundational level of society. For al-Ibrahimi, education and family were inseparable pillars of revival. Even the historical reflection on Merku Theru reminds us that civilisations endure not through wealth alone, but through values: trust, responsibility, continuity, and institutional vision. Education is the bridge between heritage and the future.

Dear Readers,

The purpose of this magazine is not entertainment alone. It is formation. It is an exercise in disciplined expression, reflective thought, and collective intellectual growth. Writing, reflecting, and publishing are acts of responsibility. They train the mind to think clearly and the heart to remain accountable before Allah.

Let this 6th edition be not only a publication, but a renewed commitment to the Qur'anic project of knowledge integration, ethical leadership, and intellectual maturity.

May Allah grant barakah in your knowledge, sincerity in your intentions, and wisdom in your engagement with the world.

With sincere prayers for your continued growth,



Prof. Dr. Dawood A.Y. Al-Hidabi

Chief Editor, Coordinator & Advisor, IIIT - IIUM

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An Educational Reflection on Qur'anic Verses (Al-Zumar 53–55)



Prof Dr. Dawood Abdulmalek Yahya Al-Hidabi
KOED, IIUM, Malaysia

Allah said:

(قُلْ يٰعِبَادِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ۚ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ) الزمر آية 53

“Say, O Prophet, that Allah says, “O My servants who have exceeded the limits against their souls! Do not lose hope in Allah’s mercy, for Allah certainly forgives all sins.¹ He is indeed the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (Al-Zumar verse 53).

(وَأَنِيبُوْا اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوْا لَهٗ ۖ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاتِيَكُمْ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُوْنَ) الزمر آية 54

“Turn to your Lord (in repentance), and (fully) submit to Him before the punishment reaches you, (for) then you will not be helped” (Al-Zumar verse 54).

(وَاتَّبِعُوْا اَحْسَنَ مَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاتِيَكُمْ الْعَذَابُ بِغَتَّةٍۭ وَّ اَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ) الزمر آية 55

“Follow (the Quran,) the best of what has been revealed to you from your Lord, before the punishment takes you by surprise while you are unaware” (Al-Zumar verse 55).

Introduction

Contemporary educational systems face significant challenges in addressing failure, misconduct, and academic or behavioural deviation among learners. In many educational contexts, errors are met with punitive or exclusionary responses rather than being recognised as integral to the human learning process. Qur’anic verses 53–55 of Surah Al-Zumar offer a distinctive ethical and educational vision that integrates mercy with responsibility and hope with disciplined commitment. This article aims to provide an educational and academic reflection on these verses and to explore their potential for shaping a reformatory, non-exclusionary educational approach.

Reflective Framework of the Verses

The verses begin with a compassionate divine address that preserves human dignity despite wrongdoing, emphasising that transgression does not sever the bond between the individual and Allah. The explicit prohibition of despair addresses a critical psychological barrier to reform, as hopelessness undermines -

motivation and the capacity for change. The verses then transition from emotional reassurance to practical guidance by calling for sincere repentance and conscious submission before opportunities for reform are lost. The directive to follow “the best of what has been revealed” establishes a standard of ethical excellence, quality, and reflective commitment rather than superficial compliance.

Educational Meanings and Implications

These verses present a mature Qur’anic understanding of human nature, viewing error as a correctable condition rather than a fixed identity. They emphasise that despair is pedagogically more destructive than wrongdoing itself, as it halts learning and personal growth. The verses also affirm that genuine reform begins internally through awareness and meaning-making before manifesting in outward behaviour.

Principles of Reformatory, Non-Exclusionary Education

The verses establish hope as a foundational educational principle without which meaningful reform is impossible. They also emphasise gradual change, personal responsibility, early intervention, and ethical excellence. Together, these principles form a balanced educational philosophy that avoids both harsh exclusion and permissive neglect.

Educational Applications at Multiple Levels

At the learner level, this approach fosters psychological safety, self-accountability, and continuous improvement. At the teacher level, it requires compassionate, non-stigmatising discourse, constructive feedback, and ethical modelling. At the institutional level, it calls for flexible, reform-oriented policies, effective support systems, and an integrated evaluation of academic and moral development.

Conclusion

Verses 53–55 of Surah Al-Zumar offer a holistic Qur’anic framework for reformatory education that prioritises human dignity, sustainable growth, and ethical excellence. They provide a powerful foundation for rethinking educational practices toward inclusion, reform, and long-term development.

As we are always in need of repentance, these verses gain renewed relevance as an invitation for self-correction, renewal, and conscious transformation at both individual and institutional levels.

Prayer of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him)

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ
(الأعراف: 23)

“Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”

(Al-A'raf:23)



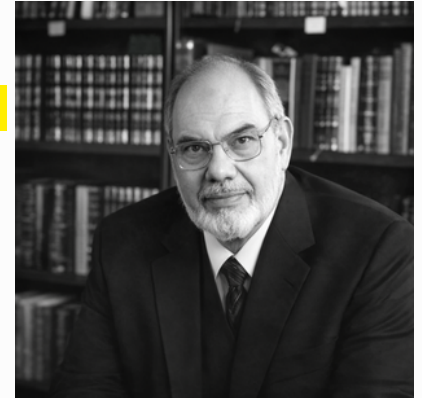
Thinking with the Qur'an:

The Intellectual Legacy of **Taha Jabir al-Alwani** and the Renewal of Islamic Thought



Prof. Dr. Dawood Abdulmalek Yahya Al-Hidabi

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Introduction: Why al-Alwani Matters Today

In an era marked by intellectual fragmentation, ethical uncertainty, and a growing separation between knowledge and values, Muslim scholars and students face a fundamental question: how can Islamic thought be renewed without severing its connection to revelation and tradition? This question lies at the heart of the intellectual legacy of Taha Jabir al-Alwani, whose work consistently addressed the epistemological roots of contemporary Muslim crises rather than their surface manifestations (Al-Alwani, 2003; Tijani, 2022).

Al-Alwani argued that the challenges confronting the Muslim world cannot be explained solely by political domination or cultural influence. Instead, he identified an internal crisis of knowledge in which Islamic disciplines that once operated within an integrated Qur'anic worldview have become fragmented. Jurisprudence often functions independently of ethical purpose, while theology risks abstraction from lived reality, weakening the Qur'an's role as the unifying source of meaning and guidance (Al-Alwani, 2011; Tijani, 2022).

What distinguishes al-Alwani's intellectual project is his rejection of both uncritical traditionalism and unreflective modernism. He neither abandoned the Islamic intellectual heritage (*turāth*) nor subordinated revelation to external epistemologies. Rather, he advanced a stance of critical fidelity: reassessing inherited interpretations under the authority of the Qur'an while engaging contemporary realities with intellectual confidence and moral responsibility (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Central to this vision is his insistence that the Qur'an function as the primary epistemological framework governing thought, ethics, and civilisation. Renewal (*tajdīd*), therefore, is not a rejection of the past, but a disciplined return to the Qur'an as the source that integrates revelation, reason, and reality (Al-Alwani, 2011).

An Intellectual Life Formed by Tradition and Crisis

Taha Jabir al-Alwani was born in 1935 in Fallujah, Iraq, within a social environment where Islamic learning was closely intertwined with communal ethics, public responsibility, and lived religious practice. His early intellectual formation unfolded amid political upheaval and ideological contestation in the Muslim world, exposing him to the complex relationship between religion, authority, and society. These formative experiences later shaped his sustained concern with the ethical use of religious knowledge and the dangers of methodological confusion in Islamic discourse (Tijani, 2022).

Al-Alwani's formal scholarly training took place at al-Azhar University, where he specialised in *uṣūl al-fiqh*. This classical grounding provided him with deep familiarity with Islamic legal reasoning, including textual interpretation, juristic inference, and methodological hierarchy. Yet he did not treat *uṣūl al-fiqh* as a closed or self-sufficient discipline. Even during his Azhar years, he began questioning why Islamic legal theory - once dynamic and morally grounded in the Qur'an - had become increasingly procedural and detached from its ethical and civilisational objectives (Al-Alwani, 2011; Tijani, 2022).

Following his studies, al-Alwani held teaching and advisory positions in Saudi Arabia, where he encountered both the strengths and limitations of institutionalised fiqh. While this experience reinforced his respect for juristic precision, it also revealed the risks of rigid formalism when legal reasoning is isolated from broader epistemological and ethical concerns (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Tajdīd as an Epistemological Necessity

For Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *tajdīd* (renewal) was neither a rhetorical slogan nor a reactionary response to modern pressures. Rather, it was an epistemological necessity grounded in the logic of revelation and the historical experience of Islamic scholarship. He consistently emphasised that renewal is intrinsic to Islam itself, as the Qur'an addresses changing human conditions while remaining anchored in immutable divine principles (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Al-Alwani located the contemporary crisis of Islamic thought not primarily in external forces such as colonialism or globalisation, but in internal intellectual fragmentation. Over time, Islamic disciplines that once operated within a coherent Qur'anic worldview became compartmentalised. Jurisprudence increasingly prioritised technical compliance, theology drifted toward abstraction, and ethics was reduced to moral exhortation rather than methodological guidance. This fragmentation, he argued, weakened the capacity of Islamic thought to respond meaningfully to complex social and civilisational challenges (Al-Alwani, 2011; Tijani, 2022).

Central to al-Alwani's critique was the confusion between the permanence of revelation and the provisional nature of human interpretation. While the Qur'an is immutable, all human understandings of it are necessarily contextual and open to reassessment. Renewal, therefore, does not target the sacred texts themselves, but the methodologies through which those texts are understood and applied. In this sense, *tajdīd* entails revisiting inherited interpretations in light of the Qur'an's overarching objectives, ethical vision, and epistemological authority (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Al-Alwani also warned against two equally harmful extremes: uncritical traditionalism, which freezes Islamic thought in historical formulations, and uncritical modernism, which subordinates revelation to external intellectual fashions. Authentic renewal, he insisted, must avoid both by remaining anchored in the Qur'an while engaging contemporary reality with analytical rigour and moral responsibility (Tijani, 2022).

Thus, *tajdīd* in al-Alwani's vision is not innovation for its own sake, but a disciplined process aimed at restoring coherence between revelation, reason, and lived reality.

Tajdīd as an Epistemological Necessity

At the core of Taha Jabir al-Alwani's intellectual legacy lies what he consistently described as the Qur'anic project - a comprehensive effort to restore the Qur'an as the primary epistemological authority governing Islamic thought, methodology, and civilisation. For al-Alwani, the crisis of contemporary Islamic thought could not be resolved through piecemeal reforms within individual disciplines. Rather, it required a fundamental reorientation of how knowledge itself is structured, evaluated, and integrated under the guidance of revelation (Al-Alwani, 2003; Umar, 2017).

Al-Alwani strongly rejected the reduction of the Qur'an to a sourcebook for legal rulings or devotional guidance alone. Instead, he argued that the Qur'an constitutes a comprehensive framework of meaning that shapes worldview, moral reasoning, and civilisational purpose. When revelation is confined to narrow juristic or ritual domains, its integrative power is lost, resulting in fragmented knowledge and

ethical incoherence. Re-centring the Qur'an, therefore, was not a call to abandon specialised disciplines, but to subject all forms of knowledge - religious and worldly alike - to Qur'anic epistemological oversight (Al-Alwani, 2011; Umar, 2017).

To articulate this vision, al-Alwani identified a set of interrelated Qur'anic axes that together form the foundation of Islamic civilisation. These include *tawhīd* (affirmation of divine unity), *tazkiyah* (moral and spiritual purification), *'umrān* (constructive human civilisation), *ummah* (collective responsibility), and *da'wah* (ethical engagement with humanity). These axes are not abstract theological ideals; rather, they function as organising principles that integrate belief, ethics, social responsibility, and historical agency within a unified Qur'anic worldview (Al-Alwani, 2003; Tijani, 2022).

A central component of this project is al-Alwani's articulation of *ḥākimiyyat al-Qur'ān* (the governing authority of the Qur'an). Importantly, he distinguished this concept from its ideological misuse in modern political discourse. For al-Alwani, Qur'anic authority is epistemological rather than political: it means that the Qur'an serves as the ultimate criterion by which all human interpretations, disciplines, and institutions are evaluated. No school of thought, juristic tradition, or intellectual framework is exempt from reassessment under the Qur'an's moral and epistemic guidance (Al-Alwani, 2011).

Through the Qur'anic project, al-Alwani sought to recover the integrative role of revelation as a living source of guidance one that unites reason and reality without collapsing into either rigid literalism or subjective relativism. This project, he maintained, is essential for any authentic renewal of Islamic thought in the modern world.

Tajdīd as an Epistemological Necessity

A central pillar of Taha Jabir al-Alwani's Qur'anic project is his insistence that the Qur'an must be approached as a coherent, integrated whole rather than as a collection of isolated verses. He described this principle as *al-waḥda al-binā'iyya* (the structural or organic unity of the Qur'an), through which meaning emerges from the internal relationships between themes, concepts, and narratives across the entire text (Al-Alwani, 2003; Umar, 2017).

Al-Alwani was deeply critical of atomistic modes of interpretation that treat verses as self-contained legal or theological proofs detached from their broader Qur'anic context. Such approaches, he argued, risk distorting the moral and epistemological intent of revelation by privileging partial readings over holistic understanding. When verses are extracted without attention to their place within the Qur'an's overall structure, interpretation becomes fragmented, and ethical coherence is lost (Al-Alwani, 2011; Daghamin, 2025).

In response, al-Alwani emphasised *tadabbur* - deep, reflective engagement with the Qur'an - as an intellectual discipline rather than a purely devotional practice. *Tadabbur* requires the reader to trace connections between verses, to observe recurring concepts and patterns, and to situate specific injunctions within the Qur'an's overarching moral vision. Through this process, the Qur'an is allowed to "explain itself," with clearer passages illuminating those that are more complex or context-dependent (Al-Alwani, 2003; Tijani, 2022).

This holistic approach also carries significant epistemological implications. By affirming the Qur'an's internal coherence, al-Alwani rejected the assumption that external philosophical or historical frameworks must supply meaning to the text. While he did not deny the value of linguistic, historical, or social analysis, he insisted that such tools must remain subordinate to the Qur'an's own logic and self-referential structure. The Qur'an, in his view, is not a passive object of interpretation but an active guide that shapes the reader's intellectual and moral orientation (Umar, 2017).

For al-Alwani, reading the Qur'an as a coherent whole is therefore foundational to intellectual renewal. It protects interpretation from reductionism, preserves ethical balance, and restores revelation as a living source of guidance capable of addressing both timeless human concerns and changing historical realities.

Sunnah, Method, and Moral Balance

Within the intellectual framework of Taha Jabir al-Alwani, the central challenge in contemporary engagement with the Sunnah lies not in questioning its authority, but in the methodologies used to understand and apply it. Al-Alwani firmly rejected claims that his work sought to marginalise the Sunnah or weaken its normative status. On the contrary, he consistently affirmed the Sunnah as an indispensable source of Islamic guidance, while arguing that methodological imbalance had distorted its role within legal and ethical reasoning (Al-Alwani, 2011; Tijani, 2022).

Al-Alwani observed that modern approaches to the Sunnah often prioritise technical scrutiny of transmission (isnād) at the expense of meaning, purpose, and Qur'anic coherence. While acknowledging the crucial role of ḥadīth sciences in preserving Prophetic reports, he cautioned that an excessive focus on formal authentication risks fragmenting the Prophetic message. When individual reports are applied in isolation from the Qur'an's overarching moral vision, the Sunnah may be reduced to a collection of discrete legal precedents rather than understood as a living embodiment of Qur'anic ethics and guidance (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Central to al-Alwani's approach is the principle of Qur'anic primacy. He maintained that the Sunnah must be interpreted within the epistemological framework of the Qur'an, which functions as the ultimate criterion (furqān) for understanding all other sources. This position does not diminish the authority of the Sunnah; rather, it situates Prophetic practice firmly within the moral, civilizational, and epistemic logic of revelation. In this sense, the Sunnah explicates and operationalises Qur'anic guidance rather than competing with it as an independent source of meaning (Al-Alwani, 2011; Umar, 2017).

Al-Alwani further emphasised the need to distinguish between different dimensions of the Prophetic legacy. Not every Prophetic action carries the same normative weight, nor should context-specific judgments be universalised without careful methodological analysis. By differentiating between normative guidance, contextual decisions, and historically contingent practices, he sought to preserve both the authority and flexibility of the Sunnah. Such clarity, he argued, is essential for avoiding rigid literalism and ensuring that Prophetic guidance continues to fulfil its ethical and civilizational purposes in changing contexts (Tijani, 2022).

Through this balanced approach, al-Alwani reaffirmed the Sunnah as a source of moral wisdom and practical guidance - inseparable from the Qur'an and responsive to the complexities of lived reality.

Reclaiming *Maqāṣid* and Revitalising *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*

A defining feature of Taha Jabir al-Alwani's contribution to Islamic thought is his effort to restore maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (the higher objectives of Islamic law) to a central methodological position within uṣūl al-fiqh. Al-Alwani argued that although classical jurists acknowledged maqāṣid as an interpretive concern, later legal developments often relegated them to a secondary role. This marginalisation, he maintained, encouraged a form of legalism that prioritized procedural correctness over ethical purpose and civilisational impact (Al-Alwani, 2011).

Al-Alwani's intervention was not simply to expand the catalogue of legal objectives, but to relocate maqāṣid within a Qur'anic epistemological framework. He emphasised that maqāṣid must be derived

primarily from the Qur'an itself rather than inferred solely from juristic consensus or historical legal practice. In advancing the concept of *maqāṣid Qur'āniyyah*, he highlighted overarching Qur'anic objectives that govern and encompass more specific legal purposes, serving as normative criteria for evaluating legal interpretations and their moral coherence (Al-Alwani, 2003; Tijani, 2022).

This *maqāṣid*-centred approach carries significant implications for legal reasoning. Al-Alwani contended that legal rulings cannot be assessed solely based on textual compliance; they must also be evaluated in terms of ethical consistency, social consequences, and their contribution to human well-being. When legal reasoning becomes detached from *maqāṣid*, it risks producing outcomes that are technically valid yet morally deficient or socially harmful (Al-Alwani, 2011).

Al-Alwani also stressed that revitalising *uṣūl al-fiqh* does not require abandoning its classical foundations. Rather, it calls for critical engagement with inherited methodologies in light of the Qur'an's governing objectives and contemporary realities. By integrating Qur'anic *maqāṣid* into legal theory, he envisioned a *fiqh* that is principled yet flexible rooted in revelation while responsive to changing contexts (Tijani, 2022).

Through this *maqāṣid*-based renewal, al-Alwani reframed Islamic law as a means of nurturing ethical integrity and social justice, rather than as an end in itself.

Ethics of Disagreement: From Conflict to Maturity

For Taha Jabir al-Alwani, disagreement (*ikhtilāf*) is not an anomaly within Islamic intellectual history but a defining feature of its vitality. Early Muslim scholars differed widely in matters of law, theology, and methodology, yet these differences were governed by ethical restraint, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the Qur'an as the ultimate reference point. The central problem facing contemporary Muslim discourse, al-Alwani argued, is therefore not disagreement itself, but the erosion of its ethical foundations (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Al-Alwani observed that modern Muslim debates are frequently marked by polemics, sectarianism, and ideological absolutism. Positions are defended as exclusive embodiments of truth, while alternative interpretations are dismissed as deviations or threats. Such patterns reflect a loss of *adab al-ikhtilāf* - the moral discipline that historically regulated scholarly disagreement and preserved unity amid diversity. Without this ethical grounding, disagreement ceases to enrich intellectual life and instead becomes a source of division and social fragmentation (Tijani, 2022).

Central to al-Alwani's ethical framework is recognition of the provisional nature of human interpretation. While revelation is absolute, all human understandings of it remain partial and context bound. Acknowledging this distinction cultivates intellectual humility and guards against the sacralisation of personal or school-based opinions. For al-Alwani, genuine maturity in disagreement emerges when scholars prioritise truth-seeking over self-affirmation and remain open to correction and dialogue (Al-Alwani, 2011).

Al-Alwani further linked ethical disagreement to methodological clarity. Many contemporary conflicts, he argued, arise not from substantive theological differences but from confusion over sources, principles, and interpretive hierarchy. By re-centring the Qur'an as the governing epistemological authority and situating secondary sources within its moral framework, disagreement can become a collaborative pursuit of truth rather than a contest for dominance (Al-Alwani, 2003; Umar, 2017).

Through this emphasis on ethical disagreement, al-Alwani sought to revive a culture of intellectual maturity grounded in humility, justice, and respect - essential for both scholarly integrity and social cohesion in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Fiqh *al-Aqalliyyāt* and a Global Ummah

One of the most influential - and at times controversial - dimensions of Taha Jabir al-Alwani's intellectual legacy is his contribution to *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt* (jurisprudence of Muslim minorities). Al-Alwani approached this field not as a marginal sub-discipline designed for exceptional cases, but as a necessary extension of Islamic legal reasoning in an increasingly interconnected and pluralistic world. The presence of Muslim minorities, he argued, is no longer temporary or peripheral; it is a permanent feature of the global ummah that requires serious methodological engagement (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Al-Alwani rejected the assumption that legal rulings developed in Muslim-majority contexts could be mechanically applied to minority settings without careful consideration. Such an approach, he warned, risks producing legal hardship, social alienation, and ethical inconsistency. Instead, he called for a context-sensitive *ijtihād* grounded in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, capable of addressing the lived realities of Muslims who navigate multiple legal, cultural, and political systems simultaneously (Tijani, 2022).

Central to al-Alwani's vision of *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt* is moral responsibility toward society at large. He emphasised that Muslim minorities are not merely residents in non-Muslim lands, but active participants in civic life, bound by ethical commitments to justice, trustworthiness, and social harmony. Islamic legal reasoning, therefore, should support constructive citizenship rather than foster isolation or antagonism, reflecting a broader integration of law, ethics, and social responsibility under Qur'anic guidance (Al-Alwani, 2011).

Al-Alwani also linked minority jurisprudence to a renewed understanding of the ummah as a moral community rather than a geographically bounded entity. Unity, in this conception, is achieved not through uniform legal practices but through shared ethical commitments rooted in the Qur'an. Diversity of context, he argued, enriches rather than weakens the ummah when approached with methodological clarity and ethical purpose (Umar, 2017).

Through his work on *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt*, al-Alwani demonstrated that Islamic jurisprudence possesses the flexibility and moral depth needed to serve Muslims faithfully across diverse social and civilisational contexts.

Islamization of Knowledge: Beyond Labels

One of the most enduring aspects of Taha Jabir al-Alwani's intellectual legacy is his contribution to the project commonly known as the Islamization of Knowledge. Although closely associated with this movement through his leadership at the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), al-Alwani consistently warned against reducing Islamization to a slogan, an institutional label, or the superficial "Islamic" rebranding of modern disciplines. For him, the crisis of knowledge confronting Muslim societies was not merely technical, but fundamentally epistemological and ethical (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Al-Alwani argued that much of modern knowledge production is shaped by assumptions of value-neutrality that sever facts from moral purpose. This separation, he maintained, produces forms of knowledge that are efficient yet ethically disoriented and powerful yet potentially destructive. Muslim engagement with modern sciences and social theories, therefore, cannot be limited to selective acceptance or rejection. Instead, it requires a critical reconstruction of knowledge grounded in revelation and capable of integrating empirical inquiry with ethical accountability (Umar, 2017).

Central to al-Alwani's vision is the principle of al-jam' bayn al-qirā'atayn - the integration of the two readings: the reading of revelation (waḥy) and the reading of creation (kawṇ). He rejected the artificial dichotomy between religious and worldly knowledge, insisting that both originate from the same divine source and must be harmonised within a unified epistemological framework. Revelation provides moral direction and ultimate meaning, while empirical reality offers context and lived experience; when separated, both readings become distorted (Al-Alwani, 2003; Tijani, 2022).



Al-Alwani further emphasised that Islamization is not a completed project, but an ongoing intellectual responsibility. It demands scholars who are grounded in the Qur'anic worldview, critically engaged with modern disciplines, and ethically committed to human well-being. By framing Islamization as epistemological renewal rather than ideological assertion, al-Alwani offered a pathway for engaging modernity without surrendering moral agency, inviting scholars to treat knowledge as a trust (amānah) exercised in the service of truth, justice, and human flourishing.

Conclusion: Continuing an Unfinished Project

The intellectual legacy of Taha Jabir al-Alwani cannot be reduced to a set of doctrines, legal opinions, or institutional achievements. What he ultimately offered was a method - a disciplined way of thinking with the Qur'an, engaging tradition critically, and responding to contemporary realities with moral responsibility. His work reminds us that the crisis of the Muslim world is not merely political or economic, but fundamentally epistemological: a crisis of how knowledge is understood, organised, and applied (Al-Alwani, 2003).

Throughout his intellectual journey, al-Alwani resisted both nostalgic traditionalism and uncritical modernism. He demonstrated that authentic renewal (tajdīd) is neither a rejection of heritage nor a surrender to external paradigms, but a principled return to the Qur'an as the governing source of meaning, ethics, and civilisation. By re-centring revelation, revitalising maqāṣid, restoring ethical disagreement, and integrating the readings of revelation and reality, he sought to recover coherence in Islamic thought without sacrificing intellectual openness (Tijani, 2022).

Importantly, al-Alwani did not claim to provide final answers to the complex questions facing Muslim societies. Instead, he consistently emphasised that renewal is an ongoing responsibility that must be carried forward by successive generations. His insistence on methodological humility, ethical restraint, and institutional collaboration reflects a deep awareness that no single scholar or movement can exhaust the Qur'an's guidance or the challenges of human history (Umar, 2017).



For students and scholars today, particularly within the IIIT intellectual tradition, al-Alwani's legacy serves as both an invitation and a challenge. It calls for intellectual courage without arrogance, faithfulness without rigidity, and engagement without loss of moral direction. To continue his unfinished project is not merely to study his works, but to embody his commitment to thinking responsibly with the Qur'an in the pursuit of truth, justice, and human flourishing.

From Madrasa to Best Student: The Making of Iftekhhar Jamil Fuad



By the time Iftekhhar Jamil Fuad arrived at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), he had already travelled a long intellectual road, one that began not in lecture halls or seminar rooms, but in a modest madrasa in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Raised in the capital city, Jamil's early education followed a traditional path. He completed *hifz* at just nine years old, an achievement that set the tone for what would turn into a life shaped by discipline and learning. Soon after, he immersed himself in languages and *Kutub al-Turāth*, the classical Islamic texts that form the backbone of traditional scholarship. While madrasa education in Bangladesh typically spans nine to ten years, Jamil completed it in just eight.

The reason, he says, lies close to home.

His sister became his first real teacher, introducing him to basic Arabic, *ṣarf*, and elementary *naḥw*. "She was an excellent educator," he reflects. "Looking back, I genuinely believe that beginning one's education under the guidance of a family member is one of the most effective ways to learn." That foundation rooted in care, patience, and rigour never left him.

After completing Dars-e-Nizami, Jamil stepped outside the traditional system. He worked part-time, sat for his secondary examinations, and later completed the SAT and IELTS, preparing himself for an entirely different academic world. That preparation culminated in his acceptance to IIUM, a decision that would redefine his intellectual trajectory.

Why Malaysia? Why IIUM?

For Jamil, Malaysia represented something rare: a society in which capitalism and democracy coexist with religious courts and Islamic governance. IIUM, in particular, offered more than just a degree. It provided a living laboratory for studying the Islamisation of knowledge, a reformist and wasatiyyah movement that integrates Islamic principles with contemporary realities.

What truly distinguished IIUM, in his view, was its synthesis: reformist thought grounded in local culture, the Shāfi'i madhhab, and Ash'arī theology.

"That combination," he notes, "is rare and intellectually enriching."



At IIUM, Jamil pursued the field of Islamic Revealed Knowledge, majoring in Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh. But one moment stands out as truly transformative. When Dr Ahmad Totonji informed -

him that he had been selected for the IIIT scholarship, everything changed. Without it, Jamil admits, he would have struggled to balance academics with part-time work. With it, he was finally able to devote himself completely to study.

Lessons Beyond the Classroom

Life at IIUM reshaped Jamil in ways that extended far beyond academics.

He developed a deep appreciation for suburban, eco-friendly living, learning that peace and proximity to nature often matter more than urban convenience. "Living near KL Sentral may give you facilities," he says, "but it can cost you inner stillness."

Intellectually, IIUM challenged him to rethink modern assumptions. One key realisation was that not every Islamic ruling needs to be justified purely through logic. "When Allah commands that daughters receive half the share of sons," he explains, "the starting point is submission, understanding the divine command within context, not forcing it into modern rational frameworks."

Another lesson proved even more consequential: Islam cannot function meaningfully without proper Shariah governance. This insight shaped his understanding of leadership, responsibility, and institutional authority. Islam, he came to see, is not merely a set of ideals; it requires structures to live and breathe in society.



Br. Jamil with Dr. Abdulhamid Zaroum

Jamil speaks with deep respect for the scholars who shaped him. Ustaz Sayyed Mohamed Muhsin instilled discipline, focus, and research ethics, even hiring him for multiple projects. Ustaz Muntaha taught him the value of tradition and supervised his undergraduate thesis. Ustaz Abdulhamid Zaroum introduced him to the political dimensions of Fiqh, while Ustaz Mustafa demonstrated how tradition can respond to modern needs. Ustaz El-Mesawi offered comparative insights, and Ustaz Fuad Sawari guided him toward the field he now pursues at the postgraduate level.

One name, however, carries particular weight.

"For me," Jamil says, "Ustaz Dawood Al-Hidabi represents resilience and transcendence."

Learning to Lead – and to Let Go

Leadership at IIUM was both formative and humbling for Jamil.

He led a section of the weekly halaqah programmes for IIIT students, where he learned that leadership demands sincerity, clarity, and discipline, not charisma. His attempt to organise weekly study circles for Bangladeshi students, however, proved far more difficult. Attendance fluctuated, momentum faded, and eventually the initiative stalled.

Yet the story did not end there.



IIIT weekly halaqah

Months later, other students revived the very study circle he had started and sustained it successfully. "That taught me something essential," Jamil reflects. "If you are sincere and do your best, even if you fail at first, your effort can still inspire others to carry it forward."

The Role of IIIT and Institutional Support

Jamil is unequivocal about the role IIIT, in collaboration with IIUM, played in his journey. The Saturday seminars stood out not just for their academic content, but for the multicultural intellectual space they created. Students from different countries, disciplines, and backgrounds gathered to exchange ideas, build networks, and encounter scholars they might never meet in regular classes.

At a practical level, these programmes also earned Jamil valuable co-curricular marks, distinguishing him from peers who focused solely on CGPA. "High grades alone are not enough," he explains. "The Best Student Award recognises balance academic excellence and engagement."

He states it plainly: IIIT was a major reason he became the overall Best Student of the university.

A Mindset for Meaningful Success

Asked what truly led to his achievement, Jamil does not speak of talent or luck. Instead, he points to habits and priorities.

Understanding, he insists, must come before memorisation. Sitting in the front rows, asking questions, and clarifying doubts are non-negotiable. He advises students to stay on campus as much as possible, limiting distractions that erode focus.

Textbooks matter more than slides. Short notes, memorising foundational texts, and participating in halaqahs sharpen both memory and insight. Equally important is self-care: proper sleep, walking, contemplation, and studying smartly, not carelessly.

Finally, he urges students to engage with people. Learning, for him, is inherently social. Conversations with classmates, teachers, and peers are not distractions but extensions of the classroom.

"Don't isolate yourself," he says. "Make dialogue part of your education."

Leaving a Legacy

If Jamil's journey reveals anything, it is this: excellence is rarely accidental. It is built quietly through discipline, sincerity, intellectual humility, and the courage to fail without quitting.

From a small madrasa in Dhaka to the highest student honour at IIUM, his story is not just about achievement. It is about purposeful learning, grounded tradition, and the steady pursuit of meaning in an increasingly distracted world.



A Journey Beyond The Classroom: Mohammed Imaz's IIUM Story

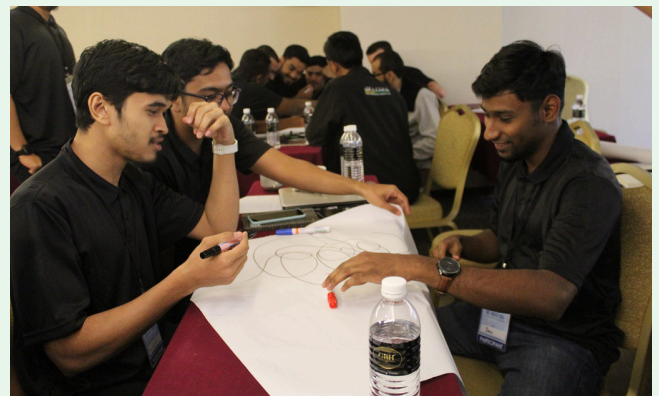


When Imaz arrived at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) from Sri Lanka, he came as a student of English Language and Literature. When he graduated in December 2025, he left as much more than that: a leader, a thinker, a debater, a community builder, and a recipient of the Best Student Award (Muhammed Iqbal Award).

But for Imaz, success at IIUM was never about a single moment.

"Honestly, it's hard to choose one defining experience," he says. "It was the many small moments that shaped me, the struggles, the conversations, the activities, the people, the environment."

Studying English Language and Literature opened his mind not just to language, but to people and society. "Language and literature are really about understanding how humans think, interact, and live," he explains. "It felt like studying humanity itself."



Beyond his major, Imaz explored Islamic studies and management electives, gaining a broader intellectual foundation. Courses on postcolonial literature, Islamisation of knowledge, decolonial theory, and human thought reshaped how he understood the world. One class that left a deep impact was Islamic Literature in English, where students engaged with thinkers and writers like Rumi, Ibn Hazm and Professor Kamal Hassan.



But IIUM wasn't only about classrooms.

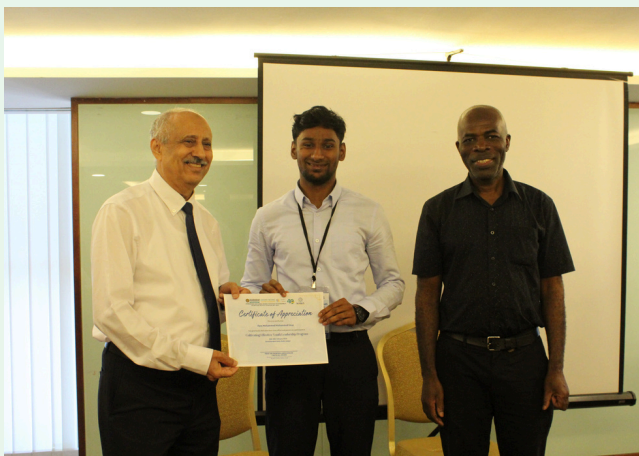
"It's a melting pot of cultures," he says. "Meeting students from different countries changed how I see the world. You learn empathy, humility, and curiosity just by living and learning together."

Spiritually, IIUM shaped him just as deeply. The central mosque, daily prayers, campus culture, and especially Ramadan created a powerful spiritual environment. "Taraweeh led

by students from different countries, iftars, tarbiyyah sessions, those experiences stay with you. They change you."

One of the most transformative parts of his journey was his involvement in student organisations. As a member of the main board committee in the English Debate Club, Imaz learned far more than debating skills. "Debate taught me about politics, economics, society, and human behaviour. It taught me how to think critically and speak responsibly." His leadership journey wasn't always easy. As assistant treasurer of the English Debate Club, fundraising became one of his biggest challenges. "Approaching donors, handling rejections, balancing academics and responsibilities, it taught me resilience, communication, and patience."

Another defining experience was his involvement in the 2023 Abu Sulayman Conference, where he served both as part of the organising committee and as a reporter. "It was my first time working on an international conference. I learned the - importance of planning, teamwork, and asking for guidance. Leadership isn't about knowing everything, it's about learning together."



A major pillar of his journey was the support of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). Through scholarships, leadership training, and intellectual engagement, IIIT played a crucial role in shaping his academic and personal development.

"One of the most meaningful moments of my life was meeting senior IIIT scholars like Dr. Hisham Al Talib," he shares. "Their humility, sincerity, and warmth changed how I view leadership. They were approachable, kind, and genuinely invested in students."

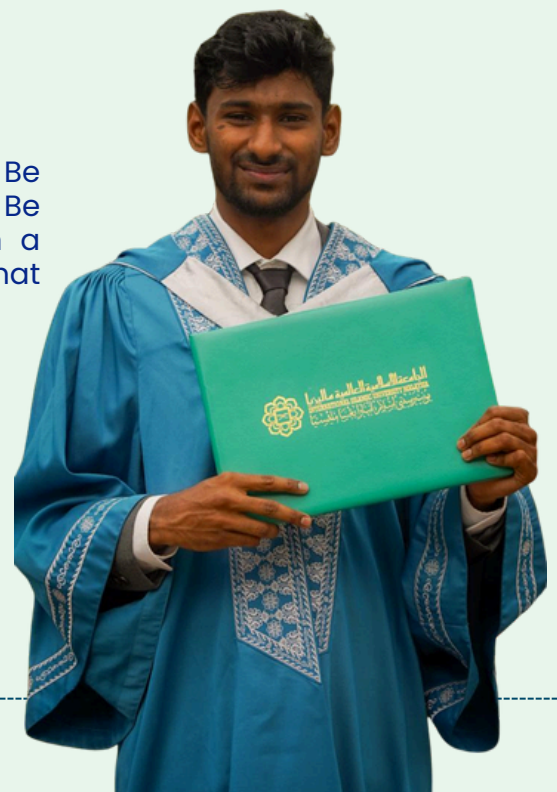
For Imaz, success comes down to three values: consistency, sincerity, and gratitude. "I just focused on showing up, doing my best, making du'ā', and trusting the process," he says. "Getting involved outside the classroom didn't distract me, it helped me grow."

His advice to IIUM students is simple but powerful:

"Don't compete with others. Stay true to your own journey. Be sincere in your intentions. Be consistent in your efforts. Be grateful for every opportunity. Use IIUM not just to earn a degree, but to build character, values, and a worldview that will guide your whole life."

As he looks back, his gratitude is clear to Allah, to his parents and family, to his lecturers, friends, IIIT, IIUM, and everyone who supported him along the way.

"I didn't just graduate with a degree," he says. "I left IIUM with direction, purpose, brotherhood, and a sense of responsibility to serve something bigger than myself."



Merku Theru, Kilakarai:

A Living Heritage of Faith, Trade, and Community Memory



Sr. Azha Nazeer

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IIUM*

On the southeastern edge of Tamil Nadu, where the Bay of Bengal dissolves into the Gulf of Mannar, lies the historic port town of Kilakarai. Small in geography but vast in cultural memory, Kilakarai represents one of South India's enduring maritime heritage settlements. For centuries, this town has functioned not merely as a port, but as a cultural bridge between regions, faith traditions, and economic worlds.



Vallal Seethakathi Entrance Arch to Kilakarai

Among its streets, Merku Theru, the West Street, occupies a special place in Kilakarai's collective memory. It is not architecturally grand, nor politically prominent, yet it has served as a central artery of social, economic, and religious life. Generations of traders, scholars, migrants, teachers, students, and benefactors have passed through this street, shaping its identity as a living corridor of community history rather than a static urban space.

Kilakarai's historical foundations are inseparable from the Maraicayar community, a Muslim mercantile group whose identity was shaped by maritime life. The term Maraicayar, derived from marakkalam (wooden ship), reflects a civilizational orientation toward mobility, navigation, and overseas exchange. Long before the emergence of modern nation-states and colonial trade regimes, these traders maintained extensive networks across Sri Lanka, Arabia, Southeast Asia, and the wider Indian Ocean world.

For centuries, the pearl economy of the Gulf of Mannar sustained Kilakarai's prosperity. Pearl diving, trading, and export created a disciplined mercantile culture structured around patience, cooperation, trust, and risk-sharing. Economic survival depended on collective responsibility rather than individual accumulation. This period established not only material wealth, but a moral economy in which commerce was inseparable from ethical obligation.



Shoreline of Kilakarai

The collapse of the natural pearl industry marked a historical turning point. Yet, Kilakarai did not experience cultural disintegration. Instead, it underwent economic transformation. Maraicayar traders redirected their commercial networks toward the gemstone markets of Sri Lanka, followed by diamond trading centres in Hong Kong and Antwerp. Later, the Gulf region, particularly Dubai emerged as a new centre of opportunity, drawing Kilakarai's merchants into gold trading, logistics, construction, and general commerce.



Streets of Kilakarai

These movements were not driven by speculative migration but by kinship networks, trust relationships, and long-standing commercial ethics. Overseas mobility was structured through family ties and community support systems, allowing economic adaptation without social fragmentation. As a result, Kilakarai gradually became a transnational town, embedded in multiple global circuits while remaining locally rooted.

The economic changes transformed Kilakarai's physical landscape. Housing patterns shifted, educational institutions expanded, mosques were renovated, and access to overseas -

education increased. However, these material changes did not erode the town's cultural foundations. Religious life, community organisation, and charitable practices remained central to social structure. Modernisation expanded institutional capacity without dismantling moral frameworks.

In Kilakarai, Islam has historically functioned not as a separate domain from economic life, but as its ethical foundation. Trade practices were governed by principles of trustworthiness, accountability, honest exchange, and social responsibility. Charity was not episodic; it was institutionalised through zakat systems, endowments, educational trusts, mosque administrations, and welfare structures. These practices formed a stable moral infrastructure that sustained social cohesion across generations.

Merku Theru emerged as a central site of this moral economy. It functioned simultaneously as marketplace, residential space, learning environment, and community forum. Children were socialised into both religious and commercial disciplines. Elders acted as mediators, trustees, and moral authorities. Wealth circulation extended beyond private accumulation into collective institutions such as schools, mosques, and welfare organisations.



Old Jummah Mosque, built somewhere between 628-630 CE

From this cultural ecosystem emerged Alhaj Dr. B. S. Abdur Rahman, one of the most significant educational philanthropists of modern Tamil Nadu. His life trajectory reflects Kilakarai's historical pattern of disciplined enterprise and ethical responsibility. Building his success through perseverance and strategic vision rather than inherited privilege, he viewed wealth not as personal achievement but as social trust.

His philanthropic focus on education represented a structural understanding of social transformation. By establishing schools, colleges, and higher education institutions, he converted commercial capital into institutional knowledge systems. These institutions expanded access to professional education for thousands of students, particularly from economically marginalised and minority communities, producing long-term intergenerational mobility.

His broader charitable contributions supporting mosques, welfare services, medical relief, and community development were consistent with Kilakarai's traditional model of integrated philanthropy. Yet his primary legacy lies in institution-building rather than individual charity. His work reflects the Islamic concept of sadaqah jariyah, enduring charity whose benefits extend beyond the lifetime of the giver.

Importantly, his legacy does not stand apart from Kilakarai's history; it represents its modern institutional expression. What earlier generations practised through mosque endowments, community schools, and welfare trusts, he expanded into large-scale educational infrastructure. His work illustrates continuity rather than rupture within Kilakarai's philanthropic tradition.

This institutional vision continued the expression of philanthropy and educating in centres of learning such as Mohamed Sathak Group of Institutions, Aalim Muhammed -

Salegh Group of Institutions, Thassim Beevi Abdul Kader College for Women, and other notable educational trusts that continue to serve minority and rural communities. These institutions did not merely provide degrees; they extended Kilakarai's long-standing moral economy into structured, modern educational frameworks, ensuring that philanthropy became sustainable, organised, and intergenerational.

Today, Kilakarai faces new transitions: digital commerce, youth migration, changing occupational patterns, and environmental vulnerability. Traditional businesses confront global competition, and social structures undergo gradual transformation. Yet the town's foundational institutions remain resilient. Religious life continues, educational structures endure, family networks persist, and community trust systems remain functional.

Merku Theru, in this sense, continues to serve as a symbolic and social anchor. It embodies the continuity of Kilakarai's moral economy across historical phases from pearl trade to gemstone commerce, from Gulf migration to institutional philanthropy, from maritime exchange to educational development.

Kilakarai's heritage is not defined solely by trade routes or economic success. It is defined by continuity of values: faith as an ethical foundation, commerce as responsibility, wealth as trust, and service as social duty. Across centuries of economic change, these principles have structured the town's adaptation without eroding its identity.

As long as religious life remains active, educational institutions continue to function, and community responsibility remains embedded in social practice, Kilakarai's heritage will persist not as a museum memory but as a living civilizational tradition shaped by faith, discipline, and collective responsibility.

Towards Sustainable and Harmonious Marriages

An Islamic Jurisprudential Approach



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This article is prepared based on my professional experience serving on the Fatwa Committee of the All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU) and my judicial role at the Qazi Court in Sri Lanka, with the blessing of Almighty Allah. It examines the key factors contributing to divorce and the breakdown of family life, and proposes solutions from an Islamic perspective. The discussion is grounded in evidence from the Qur'an, the Sunnah (Hadith), and the interpretations of classical Islamic scholars.

Marriage is a divine blessing bestowed by Almighty Allah upon His servants and a cornerstone of a stable and righteous society. Through marriage, Allah creates a bond of love, affection, and mercy between a husband and a wife. The Holy Qur'an beautifully captures this reality:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا
إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And it is among His signs has created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has created love and kindness between you. Surely in these there are signs for people who reflect.”
(Qur'an 30:21)

Marriage is meant to be a source of peace, emotional comfort, and happiness. However, contemporary society increasingly witnesses -

the weakening and breakdown of marital relationships. A closer examination reveals that this troubling trend does not stem from a single cause but rather from a combination of social, spiritual, and economic factors. For the sake of clarity and focus, only the most significant causes are highlighted here. And May Almighty Allah knows best.



SOME KEY REASONS FOR MARITAL BREAKDOWN

There are many reasons for marital breakdown. Some key factors include the following:

- One of the major contributing factors is the prevalence of improper marriages, including those conducted without a valid guardian (wali) or witnesses, as well as marriages that disregard Islamic guidelines, such as inappropriate interfaith unions.

Article

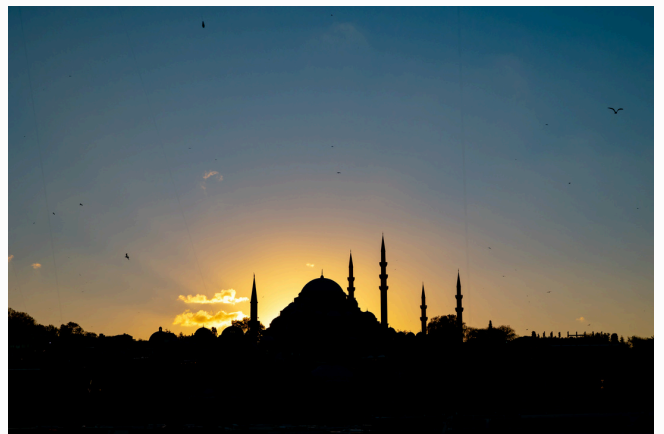
- Early marriages, where spouses lack the emotional and intellectual maturity to understand one another, also contribute to instability.
- Many marriages are based solely on external factors such as physical beauty, wealth, or family status, rather than faith and character.
- Extravagance and wastefulness in wedding ceremonies place unnecessary financial burdens on couples, often leading to stress and conflict later in life.
- The failure of spouses to fulfill their (husband and wife) respective responsibilities, coupled with financial difficulties.
- Unemployment or financial instability.
- Harmful habits, addictions, and poor communication.
- Excessive interference from parents or relatives further exacerbates marital tensions.

SUSTAINABLE AND HARMONIOUS MARRIAGES FROM THE QUR'AN, HADITH, AND THE INTERPRETATIONS OF CLASSICAL ISLAMIC SCHOLARS

This paragraph examines the solution from the Qur'an, Hadith, and the Interpretations of Classical Islamic Scholars for the key reasons mentioned above, one by one, as follows

The concept of walī from the perspectives of the four major Islamic schools of thought - *Ḥanafī*, *Mālikī*, *Shāfi'ī*, and *Ḥanbalī* - highlights point of agreement and divergence. While most scholars require a guardian for a valid *Nikāḥ*, [1] the *Ḥanafī* school permits a woman to contract her own marriage with certain conditions.

Referring to the condition of guardianship (*wilāyah*) in marriage in light of *Maqāṣid*-based principles derived from established *Sharī'ah* texts, scholars emphasize that guardianship functions as a means to achieve the objectives of marriage, particularly safeguarding the woman and preserving her dignity and honor both within her family of origin and in the new family formed through marital ties. From a *Maqāṣid* perspective, the validity of a marriage contract presupposes the presence of a guardian, and referring to the positions of most scholars regarding the guardian's role represents the most effective approach to achieving the objectives of *Sharī'ah* while protecting both the woman and the family.



Addressing these challenges requires a return to the principles of Islam. Marriages must be funded primarily based on a religious commitment. The following hadith examines this very important matter:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: " تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ: لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاظْفَرْ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ، تَرِبْتُ يَدَاكَ (صحيح البخاري: 5090)

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. So, you should marry a religious woman (otherwise) you will be a loser. (Sahih al-Bukhari 5090, Wedlock, Marriage (Nikaah)

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The correct view concerning the meaning of this Hadith is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke of what people usually do, for they seek these four characteristics, the last of which in their view is religious commitment, but you who are seeking to follow the right way should seek the one who is religiously committed. This is not a command to do so... This Hadith encourages us to seek the company of religiously committed people in all things, because the one who keeps company with them will benefit from their good attitude and good ways, and will be safe from any bad influence from them." (Sharh Muslim Wedlock, Marriage (Nikaah)

Al-Mubarakpuri (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"Al-Qadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is the people's custom to seek certain characteristics in women and to choose a wife for a certain quality. It befits those who are religiously committed to base their actions on religious guidance, especially concerning matters that are serious and have lasting effects." (Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi, Wedlock, Marriage (Nikaah)

Moral character and mutual responsibility. One effective approach is the implementation of structured premarital counseling and guidance programs. Such programs should educate prospective couples on the true purpose of marriage, the criteria for choosing a

suitable spouse, and the rights and duties of both husband and wife. The important rights of a wife and a husband in Islam are listed below.



The rights of a wife in Islam

1. The rights of a wife in Islam
 - a. The mahr
 - b. Spending
 - c. Accommodation
2. Non-financial rights
 - a. Kind treatment
 - b. How Prophet Muhammad treated his wives
 - c. Not harming one's wife

The rights of a husband in Islam

1. The obligation of obedience
2. Making herself available to her husband
3. Not admitting anyone whom the husband dislikes
4. Not going out of the house except with the husband's permission
5. Discipline
6. The wife serving her husband
7. Submitting herself to him

Article

8. The wife should treat her husband in a good manner.

(al-Baqarah 2:233, al-Nisa 4:4, Narrated by al-Bukhari, 5049; Muslim, 1714, by Ibn Majah, 2340, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, Tuhfat al-Muhtaj,)



Beyond these fundamentals, guidance should also include spiritual development, financial planning, communication skills, shared values and beliefs, sexual education, family dynamics, marriage management, and the importance of education and life experience. Couples should be encouraged to spend quality time together to strengthen their emotional bond.

Successful marriages are built on mutual understanding, compromise, respect, and accountability. Simple acts, such as exchanging kind words like “Jazakallahu khayran” and “Barakallahu feekum,” and making sincere du‘ā’ for one another, nurture love and spiritual connection. The Qur’an offers a beautiful supplication for families:

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ
أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

“Our Lord, grant us from our spouses and our Children, comfort to our eyes, and make us heads of the god-Fearing.” (Al-Furqan:74)



Finally, wedding ceremonies should be kept simple, limiting expenses to what is necessary and reasonable, in accordance with Islamic teachings.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
أَعْظَمُ النِّسَاءِ بَرَكَهً أَيْسَرُهُنَّ مَوْتَةً، وَفِي لَفْظٍ : إِنَّ
أَعْظَمَ النِّكَاحِ بَرَكَهً أَيْسَرُهُ مَوْتَةً . فالحديث أخرجه

فالحديث أخرجه أحمد في "مسنده" (24529) ،
والنسائي في "السنن الكبرى" (9229) ، وابن أبي
شيبه في "مصنفه" (16384) ، والحاكم في
"المستدرک" (2732) ، وأبو نعيم في "حلية الأولياء"
(3/186) ، جميعاً من طريق حماد بن سلمة ، عن ابن
سحيرة ، عن القاسم بن محمّد

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: The marriage with the
greatest blessing is the one of the least
expenditures.” (Musnad Ahmad, vol. 6, pg. 82,
Musnad Abi Dawud Tayalisi, Hadith: 1427,
Shu’abul Iman, Hadith: 6146)

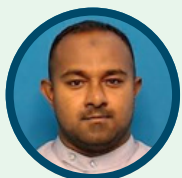


CONCLUSION

Marriage in Islam is not merely a social contract but a sacred trust that demands commitment, wisdom, and compassion. Marriage is a divine blessing bestowed by Almighty Allah upon His servants and a cornerstone of a stable and righteous society. When approached with faith, responsibility, and moderation, marriage becomes a source of lasting peace and blessing. May Almighty Allah grant all of us the ability to build strong, harmonious families and bless our lives with His mercy and sustenance.

Negotiating Epistemic Rupture:

Evolution of Integration of Knowledge Discourse in Sri Lanka



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Background

For generations, Muslim thinkers have grappled with a fundamental dilemma: how can Islam engage modern knowledge without surrendering its ethical and intellectual core? This question has haunted Islamic thought since the early encounters with Western modernity and continues to shape debates across the Muslim world today. In the nineteenth century, reformist intellectuals such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), Tahir ibn Ashur (d. 1973), and Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1937), working across regions from Cairo to the Indian subcontinent, placed this dilemma at the centre of their intellectual projects. They challenged Muslim societies to confront modern science, philosophy, and political thought critically rather than defensively, and they sought to anchor reform within long-standing institutions of learning, most notably Al-Azhar and Al-Zaytuna Universities.

The postcolonial era gave this debate new urgency and organisational form. In the late 1970s, the creation of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) marked a decisive shift from scattered intellectual reflection to a coordinated global movement. IIIT's ambition was bold: to rethink how knowledge itself is produced by integrating Islamic epistemology with modern academic disciplines. This vision inspired the establishment of international Islamic universities and a vast intellectual output, hundreds of books, conferences, and -

curricular experiments, devoted to redefining the relationship between faith, reason, and modernity.

Yet for all its global reach, the integration of knowledge project has largely been imagined through the lens of Muslim-majority societies, where institutional support and political space are often assumed. What remains strikingly underexplored is how this intellectual movement resonates beyond those settings, particularly among Muslim communities living as minorities. In such contexts, questions of identity, citizenship, and educational access fundamentally alter what "integration" can realistically mean.

This article turns to Sri Lanka to address that blind spot. Examining how Muslim intellectuals and institutions in a minority setting have engaged with the integration of knowledge discourse, this article highlights the tensions, adaptations, and possibilities that emerge when global Islamic ideas meet local political and social realities. In doing so, the Sri Lankan case invites a broader rethinking of whether the integration of knowledge can be a universal project, or whether it must be reimagined from the margins.

Early Debates

Like elsewhere, colonialism introduced an epistemic project in Sri Lanka that manufactured a civilizational dilemma, framing modernity as a Western enterprise in -

opposition to Eastern tradition. This epistemic rupture generated new and pressing questions for Sri Lankan Muslims, who, as a minority community, had to critically engage with emerging new systems of knowledge and institutions that had become vital for communal survival and progress in the colonial administrative hierarchy. In this context, Islamic thinkers such as M.C. Siddi Lebbe (d. 1897) emerged as pioneering intellectuals who responded systematically to this epistemic fracture.

Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Siddi Lebbe argued that traditional modes of Islamic knowledge production were insufficient to confront the challenges posed by colonial modernity. As a trained lawyer and committed community activist, he sharply criticized sections of the religious leadership who opposed modern knowledge on the grounds that it was inherently un-Islamic. He argued that resisting modernity would result in the long-term stagnation and marginalization of the Muslim community. In response, he articulated a reformist vision that aimed to integrate Islamic normative foundations with the advancements of modern science and education. This vision inspired the establishment of the first Muslim school, Zahira College Colombo, which sought to encourage Muslims to excel in modern education while preserving their Islamic cultural identity. While affirming that engagement with modern science was inevitable, and necessary for communal progress, he simultaneously warned against scientism, the belief that science alone constitutes the totality of truth. To counter this reductionist logic, Siddi Lebbe emphasized the importance of promoting Sufi metaphysics as a spiritual and intellectual safeguard, ensuring that Muslim engagement with modern knowledge remained ethically grounded and metaphysically informed.

Post-Colonial Developments

Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Siddi Lebbe argued that traditional modes of Islamic knowledge production were insufficient to confront the challenges posed by colonial modernity. As a trained lawyer and committed community activist, he sharply criticized sections of the religious leadership who opposed modern knowledge on the grounds that it was inherently un-Islamic. He argued that resisting modernity would result in the long-term stagnation and marginalization of the Muslim community. In response, he articulated a reformist vision that aimed to integrate Islamic normative foundations with the advancements of modern science and education. This vision inspired the establishment of the first Muslim school, Zahira College Colombo, which sought to encourage Muslims to excel in modern education while preserving their Islamic cultural identity. While affirming that engagement with modern science was inevitable, and necessary for communal progress, he simultaneously warned against scientism, the belief that science alone constitutes the totality of truth. To counter this reductionist logic, Siddi Lebbe emphasized the importance of promoting Sufi metaphysics as a spiritual and intellectual safeguard, ensuring that Muslim engagement with modern knowledge remained ethically grounded and metaphysically informed.

Unlike Siddi Lebbe, Azeez lived in a period of increasing regional mobility, which allowed him to travel to the Muslim world and engage with contemporary debates and developments. During his travels, he met the rector of Al-Azhar University, Mustafa Abd ar-Razik (d. 1947), and discussed the integration of knowledge, particularly the contributions of Muhammad Abduh to the reform of Al-Azhar. After intensive engagement with the writings of Islamic thinkers and intellectual leaders, Azeez became convinced in the 1960s of the need to establish an Islamic university in

a broad range of contemporary Islamic and human sciences, reflecting a holistic model of knowledge integration. In terms of achievements, the multidisciplinary grounding through which Islamic studies were taught at NIIS enabled its graduates to pursue higher education across a wide range of disciplines, Sri Lanka, an institution that could produce religious scholars well-versed in both Islamic sciences and modern knowledge. He eloquently articulated this vision in his historical essay, "We Need an Islamic University" (1963). Dr. Mohamed Shukri (d. 2020), an alumnus of Zahira College Colombo and a student of Azeez who also studied at the University of Edinburgh, carried forward these debates. However, he emerged as a more radical critic of modern Western knowledge, grounding his perspective in Sufism and Islamic ethics. In this regard, Shukri aligned more closely with Sidde Lebbe than with his teacher Azeez, who advocated for the promotion of modern education at any cost, seeing it as essential for securing the future of Sri Lankan Muslims as a second-order minority in the country. Viewed in context, Shukri's insistence on re-grounding knowledge within an Islamic framework was countercultural: while most intellectuals emphasized the importance of modern knowledge, he highlighted the epistemic challenges it could pose to the Muslim community. He did not reject modern knowledge outright; rather, he urged Muslims to remain critically aware of its limitations. Expanding on this vision, from the later 1970s onwards, Shukri wrote extensively on Islamic theories of education, political science, arts, research methods, economics, ethics, and environmental ethics in the local Tamil language. His central message emphasized that modern Western epistemology fails to account for the full complexity of the human being, particularly its spiritual dimension, and he insisted that modern education systems be restructured to reflect the Islamic conception of human nature.

The Rise of Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies

By the early 1970s, debates over the demand for an Islamic university and the rethinking of Islamic epistemology had evolved into a broader communal conversation. These discussions prompted community leaders, including activists, philanthropists such as Mohamed Naleem, and academics, to establish the Naleemiah Institute for Islamic Studies (NIIS), an institution dedicated to producing Islamic scholars grounded in both Islamic and human sciences. The founding of the institute marked a paradigm shift and represented the first systematic attempt to institutionalize the long-standing discourse on integrating Islamic and human sciences within a single framework. Interestingly, both AMA Azeez and Dr. Mohamed Shukri were involved in the project, envisioning a transformative impact on the country's religious and social leadership. Later, Dr. Shukri became the director of the institution after returning from his post-graduate studies at University of Edinburgh.

The Naleemiah Institute for Islamic Studies (NIIS) has undergone several phases in pursuing its objectives. Initially, with no local model to guide them, the institute's pioneers travelled to Pakistan to engage with Islamic thinkers, including Maulana Maududi (d. 1979). They were particularly inspired by the Al-Aleemiyyah Institute of Islamic Studies and the writings of its founder, Fazlur Rahman Ansari (d. 1974), who extensively explored knowledge integration in the 1970s. Ansari's book *Quranic Foundations and the Structure of the Muslim Society* especially influenced the vision of NIIS's founders. In its early years, NIIS offered traditional Islamic sciences alongside a selection of human and natural science subjects within a seven-year study program. In 1996, the institute signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Islamic University, Islamabad, -

enabling it to expand and integrate its curriculum. The program came to include, alongside Islamic sciences, subjects such as sociology, philosophy, logic, and studies of the Muslim world. Over the past decade, the curriculum has further evolved to incorporate -including Economics, Education, Political Science, International Relations, Management Studies, and Sociology.

Transnational Influence

Over the past decade, debates on the integration of knowledge within and beyond the institution have been significantly shaped by graduates who pursued their studies in Malaysia, particularly at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Many IIUM graduates were exposed to broader debates on the Islamization and integration of knowledge, as well as discussions on curriculum reform in Malaysia. They subsequently sought to reimagine and contextualize these intellectual engagements within the Sri Lankan setting. In this regard, it is important to note the role played by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in providing scholarships to many of these students, thereby facilitating their academic training. An examination of the research projects they undertook reveals a clear attempt to translate the integration of knowledge paradigm into concrete and practical applications, moving beyond purely philosophical concerns. Their theses covered a wide range of fields, including politics, finance, law, history, education, language, sports studies, inter-faith dialogue, comparative religions and to core Islamic disciplines. Upon returning to Sri Lanka, many of these graduates played an active role in strengthening community organizations and educational institutions. Beyond these individual contributions, over the past decade Islamic Institutions such as NIIS has entered into Memoranda of Understanding with two leading institutions, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and Universiti -

Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), thereby fostering vigorous exchanges of knowledge, ideas, and academic collaboration between the institutions which have kept the Islamic theory of knowledge at the centre of their academic programmes.

Conclusion

The story of the integration of knowledge in Sri Lanka is ultimately one of adaptation and resilience. Beyond grand theoretical debates, the phenomenon took shape through everyday concerns: how a Muslim minority could preserve its religious and cultural identity, secure access to education, and engage with modern forms of knowledge without sacrificing its ethical and spiritual foundations. Over time, these concerns were translated into concrete educational initiatives and institutional experiments. Most notably, the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies emerged as a key site where local needs were addressed alongside an intellectual openness to global Islamic and modern scholarly currents.

This journey was strengthened by connections beyond Sri Lanka. Encounters with Islamic universities and scholarly debates in Malaysia offered fresh perspectives and practical models, helping local scholars move from ideas to action. What they brought back was not a ready-made blueprint, but inspiration to rethink curricula and educational goals in ways that made sense within Sri Lanka's unique social and political setting.

At the same time, the experience points to a continuing vulnerability. Without strong state support, minority institutions often rely on their own limited resources. Here, international Islamic universities can make a meaningful difference, by offering academic recognition, mentorship, and partnership. Such engagement helps ensure that these local efforts are not isolated experiments, but part of a shared and evolving global Islamic educational conversation.

Knowledge and Society:

Inside Bashir al-Ibrahimi's Reformist Vision



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Bashir al-Ibrahimi (1850–1936) was a pioneering Algerian Islamic scholar and reformer whose thought profoundly shaped the intellectual and social landscape of his time. As one of the founding figures of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, al-Ibrahimi sought to revive the spiritual, educational, and moral foundations of society under colonial rule. Rejecting both blind fatalism and uncritical imitation of foreign models, he emphasised the liberation of the individual mind as the first step toward societal revival. His vision combined rigorous scholarship with practical reform, offering a model of Islamic thought that bridged tradition and modernity. This article explores al-Ibrahimi's reformist methodology, his critique of mystical passivity, and his enduring legacy in shaping knowledge and society.

Civilizational Diagnosis of the Crisis of National Revival

Every serious reformist call begins with a profound diagnosis of the causes of weakness and decline in a nation. Bashir al-Ibrahimi, one of the foremost leaders of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, recognised that the deterioration that befell Algerian society was not merely the result of French colonialism, but the product of internal accumulations of intellectual stagnation and doctrinal fatalism that had enabled the coloniser to consolidate its rule. The crisis was,

above all, civilizational and epistemic. Revival could not occur without an awareness of this bitter historical reality and the development of a strict, methodological plan that aimed not only at expelling the coloniser, but at liberating the Algerian individual from the intellectual constraints shackling mind and spirit. This diagnosis set al-Ibrahimi and his companions on a long-term strategic trajectory that diverged from rapid or episodic resistance movements and sought instead to build the solid foundations of sustainable liberation.

From Personal Leadership to Collective Vision

The reformist vision of al-Ibrahimi rejected reliance on individual efforts or ephemeral charismatic leadership, which typically collapses with the absence of the leader. The Association's leaders were convinced that true renaissance and sustainable liberation could only be achieved if society played an essential and active role in carrying out the project of change. This shift, from the "inspired leader" to the "educated and conscious public," embodies the essence of the Association's reformist thought: the responsibility for revival rests on individuals who must first be intellectually and spiritually free. Thus, the Association sought to create a collective consciousness capable of shouldering the burdens of genuine spiritual and national liberation, restoring the primacy of institutions rather than individuals.

The Strategic Timing of the Association's Establishment

The idea of establishing the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, which began in earnest in 1920 and culminated in its official founding in 1931, was far from arbitrary. It coincided with the centenary of the French occupation, a period sufficient for entrenching material and moral colonialism. The timing itself was a declaration of refusal to accept an imposed historical fate and the beginning of an organised civilizational counter-movement. The objective was to create an organisation of religious, scholarly, and moral character that avoided direct political confrontation to evade colonial repression, while devoting itself to a more critical task: preparing the generation that would ultimately carry the mission of liberation. The underlying conviction was that deep, grassroots work was the foundation of success.

Liberating the Individual as a Precondition for Liberating the Homeland



Al-Ibrahimi's methodological compass pointed to a crucial principle: the liberation of the individual precedes the liberation of the land. This reflects the depth of the Association's strategic thinking, which held that material colonialism relied on a powerful moral colonialism that corrupted beliefs and spread superstition. A nation cannot emancipate itself unless the minds of its people are first freed from fatalism, ignorance, and flawed concepts. The focus on correcting -

doctrine and eliminating innovations was, therefore, a direct attempt to neutralise the ideological tools exploited by France to cement its rule, especially the doctrine of passive predestination that sanctified surrender and discouraged resistance.

A Realistic, Long-Term Methodology

Al-Ibrahimi's reformist methodology was marked by exceptional realism and planning that transcended immediate temporal confines. He was future-oriented, rejecting reckless hastiness that could destroy the entire project. This realism required strict adherence to disciplined rules to ensure continuity under harsh colonial repression. The aim was to construct a comprehensive and sustainable reform that penetrated the depths of individual psychology and social structures, rather than to stir fleeting enthusiasm or engage in unequal confrontations that would prematurely end the reformist project.

The Jurisprudence of Priorities: Beginning with Foundational Doctrinal and Educational Needs

The project placed the principle of "giving precedence to the essential over the important" at the forefront of its priorities. Reform began with necessities: imparting beneficial knowledge, correcting sound doctrine, and improving practical behaviour. This prioritisation required avoiding complex theological debates and metaphysical disputes irrelevant to the daily lives of ordinary people. Efforts were directed toward what would produce the greatest positive impact, focusing on foundational construction rather than the ornamental intellectual disputes that had exhausted the energies of earlier generations without contributing to civilizational progress.

Practical Principles of Reform: Balancing the Necessary and the Possible

The Association adopted the maxim "what cannot be attained in full should not be abandoned in full" as a realistic approach to setting goals. This reflected a flexible attitude -

toward difficult realities: the inability to achieve complete reform did not justify abandoning reform altogether. Instead, it meant identifying achievable intermediate goals and moving steadily forward, however small the initial steps. This cumulative perspective ensured continuity and growth, turning small achievements into a solid base for future aspirations, unlike idealistic movements that demanded everything and achieved nothing.

The Principle of Preventing Harm: Strategy for Survival Under Repression

The maxim “preventing harm takes precedence over procuring benefit” justified avoiding direct political or military confrontation during the Association’s formative stages. The paramount priority was to prevent the closure of the schools and cultural centers it had established the intellectual infrastructure of liberation. Shutting down these institutions would have been a greater disaster than any immediate political gain. Thus, tactical avoidance of confrontation was a survival strategy, ensuring the continued transmission of knowledge and moral education that fueled national consciousness and prepared the way for the eventual revolution.

The Imperative of Action: Converting Ethics into Daily Practice

Faced with widespread lethargy and fatalistic passivity, al-Ibrahimi emphasised that “a little action is better than much talk.” Moral principles and virtues had to be transformed from abstract narratives into practical behaviours lived daily. This call was directed especially toward scholars and teachers, urging them to be living embodiments of the values they taught. Through this principle, the Association sought to instil work ethics, responsibility, and perseverance foundational to economic and civilizational revival, and opposed to the culture of dependence on shrines and blessings.



The Imperative of Action: Converting Ethics into Daily Practice

Socially, the Association grounded its work in principles of balance and moderation, rejecting both complete isolation and uncritical fascination with modernity. It is believed that the future of the nation must be built upon its past, and that Islam is fully compatible with sound forms of civilisation. Not all that is old should be rejected, nor all that is new accepted. This equilibrium enabled the Association to embrace modern sciences, technologies, and organisational methods without compromising its doctrinal or moral foundations.

The Imperative of Action: Converting Ethics into Daily Practice

To transform theory into a societal movement, the reform program was anchored in reviving the Qur’anic duties of commanding good and forbidding evil in their proper religious sense. This revival moved beyond the narrow, punitive traditional understanding toward a structured social force aimed at combating moral and social corruption, promoting upright behaviour, and resisting widespread innovations and superstitions. This practical focus granted the Association broad popular credibility and made it a tangible force of change in daily Algerian life.

Mobilising Popular Committees for Oral Preaching

Among the effective tools employed by al-Ibrahimi was the formation of temporary -

committees composed of devout and conscious laypeople. These committees functioned as field teams responsible for direct oral preaching across villages, ensuring that the reform message reached even the most remote areas. This grassroots organisation reflected al-Ibrahimi's belief in involving ordinary people in the reform process, transforming them from passive recipients into active participants. These committees embodied the collective project and laid the social groundwork for transmitting reformist consciousness across generations.

The Role of the Press in Shaping Reformist Consciousness

Al-Ibrahimi fully appreciated the power of the press as a mass-communication tool. He encouraged newspapers to disseminate awareness regarding the duties of commanding right and forbidding wrong. Newspapers affiliated with the Association, or influenced by its ideas, became mobile schools entering every home, exposing superstitions, elucidating sound doctrine, and advocating virtuous ethics. For al-Ibrahimi, the written press was not merely informational but a decisive instrument in shaping reformist consciousness and transmitting it to the public hungry for truth.



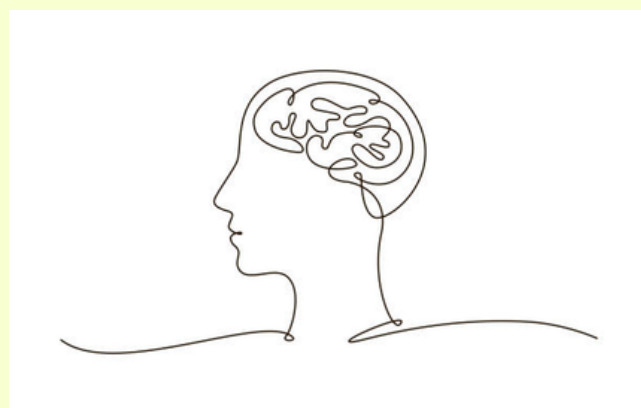
Al-Ibrahimi's Ingenuity: Employing Popular *Malhūn* Poetry to Dismantle Superstition

One of the Association's most astute strategies was the use of *malhūn* poets (popular poets writing in vernacular Arabic). Al-Ibrahimi -

recognised their powerful influence on the collective imagination and emotional life of the masses. These poets were commissioned to compose verses promoting moral reform and warning against innovations and Sufi orders. This approach reflected the Association's intent to penetrate the psychological inner worlds of ordinary people using their own language and cultural expressions, rather than rejecting their popular culture wholesale.

Training Itinerant Preachers and Understanding Local Psychologies

Central to the practical program was the training of itinerant preachers as "bearers of glad tidings, not agents of repulsion." They were equipped with deep knowledge of the psychological and cultural traits of each region, enabling them to tailor their sermons and address local innovations with precision. This audience-centred approach significantly enhanced the Association's capacity to eliminate innovations and counter harmful social practices.



Reforming Social Phenomena: Combating Widespread Major Sins

The reform campaign extended to confronting prevalent social vices such as alcohol, gambling, adultery, and the unjust deprivation of women from inheritance. These efforts sought to rebuild society's moral fabric and revive neglected religious obligations such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Repairing family and social relations was seen as -

essential for creating the national strength required to resist colonialism; no morally fragmented society can rise or resist oppression.

The Qur'anic Axis: From Dead Recitation to a Discourse of Revival

At the heart of al-Ibrahimi's intellectual project lies the Qur'an as the true moment of awakening and the discourse of revival. He posed a fundamental question: why does the Qur'an fail to affect hearts despite its frequent recitation? His diagnosis was that Muslims had reduced the Qur'an to a ritualistic object of blessing (recited over the dead or used for exorcism), far removed from its primary purpose as a book of action, reflection, and transformation. This indicated a separation between text and life and between knowledge and action.

Transforming the Qur'an from a Book of Ritual Blessing to a Book of Action

The true secret of the Qur'an, in al-Ibrahimi's view, lies not in memorisation or formal recitation but in "reflection, understanding, emulation, and moral embodiment." This shift from superficial recitation to thoughtful engagement and serious application was essential for cognitive and psychological renewal. Fatalism, laziness, and social decay were consequences of disabling the Qur'an's functional role as a book of action. Reviving reflective engagement was thus the first step toward restoring the Qur'an's transformative force.

The Causes of the Modern Disconnection from Revelation

Al-Ibrahimi linked the diminished influence of the Qur'an to deviation from the purposes of revelation and a preoccupation with unproductive theological disputes. These deviations produced stagnation and passivity, leaving the nation vulnerable to colonial exploitation. Reestablishing the connection between Qur'anic knowledge and everyday life

was essential for liberating individual will and rebuilding social responsibility.

Critique of Mystical Cognition: Confronting Sufism as Thought

Al-Ibrahimi issued a candid and severe critique of Sufi orders, which he viewed as responsible for inhibiting action and jihad and promoting fatalism and surrender. This mystical orientation, in his analysis, offered negative spiritual alternatives that replaced positive action and resistance. His critique dismantled the religious veneer that justified social inertia and acceptance of corruption.

Fatalism: The Doctrine of Surrender in Service of Colonialism

Central to al-Ibrahimi's critique was the doctrine of passive predestination propagated by Sufi orders. He recognised it as a crucial pillar supporting colonialism. France exploited this doctrine by convincing Algerians that occupation was a divine decree beyond human control, rendering resistance futile. Liberating individuals from this fatalistic theology was the decisive moment that prepared society for revolution, transforming political liberation into an article of faith rooted in human responsibility.

Dismantling the Intellectual Foundations of Sufi Orders

Al-Ibrahimi did not limit his critique to Sufism as a social phenomenon; he sought to dismantle its intellectual foundations. He argued that key mystical doctrines, such as unity of witness and annihilation, did not derive from the Qur'an or Sunnah but from Hermetic and ancient esoteric traditions. Identifying these external origins stripped such doctrines of Islamic legitimacy and facilitated their removal from popular consciousness.

Rejecting the Division of Knowledge into Exoteric and Esoteric

To address this epistemological structure, al-Ibrahimi demanded a complete rejection of -

dividing Qur'anic meaning into exoteric and esoteric layers, a division that opened the door to deviant interpretations and legitimised various superstitions and innovations. He insisted on understanding the Qur'an according to its explicit texts and Arabic linguistic norms, thereby restoring clarity and rationality to Islamic thought.

The Hermetic Roots of Sufi Esotericism

In his analysis, al-Ibrahimi argued that the epistemic roots of Sufi esotericism trace back to ancient and Hermetic traditions. This historical contextualization aimed to discredit such ideas as foreign intrusions into Islam, thus assisting reformists in their efforts to eradicate them as intellectual obstacles hindering revival.

Educational Reform: Modern Civilisation Begins with the School

Al-Ibrahimi considered educational reform the engine that drives modern civilisation, insisting that religious and social reform must be coupled with the modernisation of pedagogical methods and curricula. He argued that the extensive metaphysical debates of classical Islamic theology had yielded little practical benefit and that the demands of the modern era required a shift from abstract reasoning to applied knowledge.

Priority of Understanding Over Memorisation: Forming the Active Citizen

At the heart of the educational reform was the principle that understanding takes precedence over rote memorisation. Students were to be guided toward deep comprehension so they could become citizens capable of critical analysis and effective problem-solving, rather than passive recipients of knowledge. This shift was essential for forming a generation capable of decision-making and assuming responsibility for liberation and nation-building.

Simplicity of Expression as a Condition for Effective Message

One of the fundamental principles of the Association was the preference for clear and simple language over obscurity and philosophical complexity. Al-Ibrahimi believed that accessible language was necessary to ensure the reformist message reached all segments of society. Such clarity strengthened public understanding of doctrinal and social issues and democratized knowledge beyond elite circles.

Addressing Reality: Moving Beyond Fruitless Metaphysical Debates

Al-Ibrahimi called for focusing educational and religious discourse on the real, lived issues of society, rather than on abstract metaphysical debates. He argued that the preoccupation with such disputes had drained the energy of the Muslim world during its decline and that priorities in the colonial era had to include developing the sciences of society, economics, and practical life.

Diagnosing Dual Colonialism: Material and Moral

Al-Ibrahimi reasserted that colonialism in Algeria was dual: material colonialism executed through military force, and moral colonialism executed through ignorance and superstition. The latter operated through Sufi sheikhs and collaborators who influenced the people in the name of religion and encouraged fatalistic submission. This dual structure guided the Association's efforts toward dismantling the moral foundation of colonialism first.

True Liberation: Uprooting Corrupt Concepts from the Mind

Accordingly, true liberation, in al-Ibrahimi's view, required freeing individuals from the corrupt religious and social concepts implanted by colonialism and its local agents. Uprooting these ideas, especially fatalistic predestination,

liberated human will and fostered the internal motivation necessary for resistance. Intellectual reform thus became a form of psychological and political emancipation.

Ijtihad in Civic Affairs: Opening the Doors of Civilisation

In the social sphere, al-Ibrahimi affirmed that human association is essential for life and that religion does not conflict with the needs of modern civic life. He opened the door of ijtihad in economic transactions and civil laws, while preserving doctrinal fundamentals rooted in unequivocal texts. This laid the foundation for a balanced relationship between Islam and modern civilisation, rejecting stagnation and embracing constructive development.

Intellectual and Political Liberation: The Necessary Link Between Faith and Revolution

Liberation from fatalistic doctrines and the restoration of a theology of responsibility forged the connection between intellectual reform and political revolution. The Association's reformist works prepared society to view colonialism as a hostile force requiring active resistance, rather than as an immutable fate. This necessary connection made the 1954 armed revolution a logical outcome, not a sudden rupture.



Pillars of the Project: Identity, Doctrine, and Education

Al-Ibrahimi's comprehensive reform project can be summarised in three core principles: reaffirming Algeria's national identity as part

of the Arab-Islamic world; reforming doctrine to free the mind from cognitive obstructions; and integrating educational reform with social reform, since education based on understanding inevitably uproots outdated perceptions from society. These pillars formed a clear roadmap for revival.

The Awareness Revolution as a Prelude to the 1954 Armed Revolution

A careful reading of al-Ibrahimi's thought shows that liberating minds from fatalism and passivity (before liberating land) was the prerequisite for the Algerian Revolution of 1954. Revolutionary leaders such as Mostefa Ben Boulaïd, who had been students of the Association, were direct fruits of this deep reformist effort. The religious and intellectual reform movement thus constituted an "awareness revolution" that produced a generation believing in its capacity to transform its reality.

Conclusion: Sound Knowledge as the Driving Force of Revival

In conclusion, al-Ibrahimi's project demonstrates that the struggle against colonialism was not merely military but fundamentally intellectual and epistemic. The Algerian experience proved that sound knowledge and purified doctrine (free from fatalism and passivity) constitute the true driving force of revival and liberation. Integrating knowledge with society and transforming it into will and action was the Association's greatest achievement, and its methodology remains a viable blueprint for reform movements across the Islamic world.



Leading with Purpose:

Reflections on My Leadership Journey as an IIUM PhD Student, IIIT Scholarship Recipient, and Graduate of NIIS



Br. Mohamed Arkam

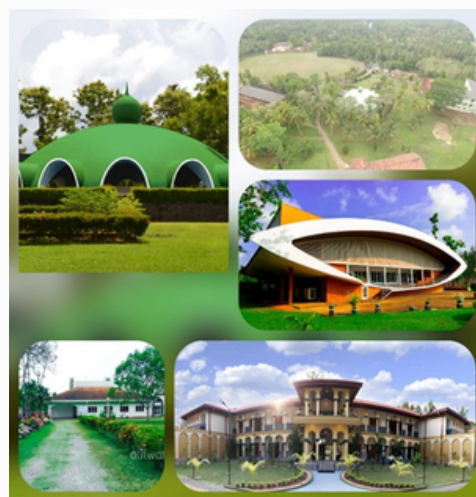
*PhD Student,
ISTAC, IIUM*

Leadership is a dynamic, evolving journey influenced by educational foundations, lived experiences, and a willingness to serve humanity. For a postgraduate student navigating the demanding environment of doctoral studies, leadership becomes more than a position; it becomes a process of self-development and purposeful contribution. My experience as a PhD student at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), enhanced by my role as President of the Postgraduate Student Society (PGSS) 2024/2025, exemplifies this multidimensional transformation. Grounded in the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies (NIIS) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), my leadership journey has been shaped by academic rigour, Islamic values, multicultural engagement, and a continuous desire to grow as a responsible Muslim leader. This reflective article brings together these experiences into a single narrative—documenting the foundations of my leadership identity, the responsibilities I carried, the challenges I embraced, the lessons I learned, and the values that continue to guide my journey.

NIIS: The Intellectual and Spiritual Foundation of My Leadership Identity

The Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies (NIIS) in Beruwala, Sri Lanka, stands at the

heart of my intellectual formation and personal development. As my alma mater, NIIS is more than an educational institution—it is the environment where my worldview was shaped, where the seeds of leadership were planted, and where I first learned that knowledge is not merely an individual pursuit but an amanah, a trust. NIIS is known for its strong integration of Islamic scholarship and character development, and these elements became central pillars of my leadership ethos. The structured academic rigour at NIIS taught me to appreciate discipline, punctuality, and systematic thinking. But what shaped me even more deeply was the ethical orientation cultivated through its holistic curriculum. At NIIS, learning was intertwined with humility, sincerity, respect for scholars, and an unwavering sense of responsibility toward the community. Lessons on honesty, moderation, and sincerity were reinforced daily not only through formal instruction but through lived experience—our interactions with lecturers, engagement in community service, and the spiritual reminders embedded in campus routines.



NIIS cultivated a mindset of khidmah (service) to mankind within me and nurtured the belief that Islamic leadership is ultimately rooted in moral character. These values became the backbone of my later leadership at IIUM, particularly when facing complex cultural dynamics, academic pressures, and community responsibilities. NIIS prepared me intellectually, ethically, and spiritually for the multifaceted leadership roles that awaited me.

IIUM: A Global Academic Space That Shapes Leadership Through Diversity



IIUM is a unique global institution—one where diversity is not a slogan but a daily lived reality. With students from more than a hundred countries, IIUM is a vibrant microcosm of the global ummah. For a postgraduate student, this environment is a training ground for intercultural sensitivity, global-mindedness, and collaborative thinking. As a PhD student, I engaged with peers who carried diverse educational backgrounds, some from traditional madrasah systems, others from Western universities, and many from hybrid institutions. Interacting with such diverse perspectives broadened my understanding of knowledge, culture, and leadership. It also exposed me to varying communication styles, problem-solving approaches, and expectations. These experiences taught me that leadership is never one-dimensional; it must be adaptive, empathetic, and culturally intelligent.

IIUM's philosophy of Integration of knowledge, coupled with its commitment to producing responsible global citizens, influenced my own leadership approach. I -

learned that leadership in an international environment requires more than administrative competence; it demands constructive dialogue, respect, and the ability to engage with people beyond cultural and ideological barriers. This context shaped my leadership worldview, particularly during my tenure in PGSS, when I had to represent, communicate with, and support students from vastly different cultural backgrounds. It pushed me to embody fairness, inclusivity, and respect—values essential for effective leadership in diverse academic spaces.

Leadership Through Service: Lessons from My PGSS Presidency

My presidency of the Postgraduate Student Society (PGSS) was one of the most significant leadership experiences of my academic journey. PGSS is the official student society for all postgraduate students at IIUM, overseen by the Centre for Postgraduate Studies (CPS). It is a university-wide student body at IIUM, representing thousands of postgraduate students across various faculties. Leading such a community involves the responsibility to serve, advocate for, and support growth.

During my tenure, we focused on organising programmes that addressed students' academic, personal, and leadership needs. These included: academic writing workshops, thesis and research methodology seminars, leadership and soft-skills development training, mental health and motivational sessions, and international postgraduate networking programmes. One of our key initiatives was the leadership training programme for postgraduate students of different nationalities. The training emphasised Muslim leadership models, practical leadership skills, and transformative leadership values. The success of these initiatives stemmed not only from the content delivered but also from the teamwork behind them. Our PGSS committee consisted of students from various

faculties and cultural backgrounds, each contributing unique strengths.

My time in this role reshaped my understanding of leadership through several core lessons. I learned that authentic leadership requires deep emotional engagement—meeting students amid personal, financial, or academic challenges calls for consistent empathy, patience, and resilience. Through this, I also saw that delegation is far from a weakness, but a critical strength; balancing doctoral studies with my responsibilities meant empowering my team, trusting in their capabilities, and actively encouraging their growth. Above all, I learned that accountability is the compass for ethical leadership. Representing postgraduate students in formal university settings carried a profound weight of responsibility, where every statement had consequences. This demanded sound judgment, sincerity, and transparency in every action. These experiences crystallised a fundamental truth: leadership is not defined by authority, but by responsibility, service, and a shared sense of purpose.

The IIIT Scholarship: Strengthening Leadership with Intellectual Purpose



Receiving the IIIT scholarship was a transformative moment in my academic journey. IIIT's mission to revive Islamic intellectual traditions, integrate knowledge, and promote ethical scholarship is deeply aligned with my own aspirations.

Receiving this scholarship was transformative, extending far beyond financial support to -

frame a profound sense of duty. It opened doors to vital networks, trainings, seminars, publications, and research, challenging me to engage critically with contemporary issues in Muslim societies, education, and governance. The intellectual tradition here, with its emphasis on bridging Islamic epistemology and modern social sciences, fundamentally enriched my academic approach and deepened my commitment to meaningful scholarship.

Beyond the intellectual, it instilled a strong ethical responsibility. Scholarship within this framework is understood as a value-driven pursuit, consistently guided by principles of *ikhlas* (sincerity), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and justice. These values became my anchor, grounding my decisions in student leadership and shaping my entire approach to ethical research. Above all, it defined a model of leadership responsibility. The expectation to embody integrity, humility, and excellence served as a constant motivation, ensuring my academic work and leadership roles were held to the same high standard. This reinforced that authentic leadership is not an avenue for personal ambition, but a commitment to the collective betterment of society.

Developing a Leadership Philosophy Rooted in Islamic Values

Throughout my leadership journey, I have continually reflected on Islamic teachings, which have profoundly influenced my approach. The prophetic model offers invaluable guidance by emphasising leadership rooted in mercy (*rahmah*), justice (*adl*), consultation (*shura*), humility (*tawadu'*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*). These core principles shape every aspect of my leadership practice. For instance, *shura* informs our teamwork and collective decision-making processes; *amanah* ensures transparency and accountability; *ihsan* drives us toward striving for excellence; and *rahmah* influences how we address and support student concerns. Embedding these values has fostered a healthy team culture -

grounded in respect, trust, and mutual support. I also recognise that Islamic leadership aligns naturally with many contemporary leadership theories, such as transformational, servant, and intercultural leadership. My experience in PGSS exemplifies this integration in action, demonstrating how these principles can be effectively applied in practice and create a positive impact.



The challenges inherent to this role were, in retrospect, its most formative instructors. Navigating the intense demands of a PhD alongside my duties required rigorous discipline and constant refinement in prioritising effectively. Operating within tight resource constraints pushed me toward innovative solutions and creative problem-solving. Engaging a deeply multicultural student body required me to develop a nuanced cultural intelligence and a diplomatic approach to communication, ensuring every voice felt heard. Furthermore, learning to work within - and sometimes navigate - complex administrative structures taught me the art of patient negotiation and strategic advocacy. Each of these hurdles strengthened my leadership capacity by building resilience, honing my strategic thinking, and reinforcing my ability to remain both calm and decisive under pressure.

Continuing the Mission Beyond Tenure

My tenure as President may have formally -

concluded, but the mission of leadership it instilled is a lasting pursuit. Authentic leadership, I learned, is a mindset and a practice—it does not expire with a title. Moving forward, I am committed to carrying this ethos into my future work and contributions.

I plan to contribute to the intellectual legacy that has shaped me by engaging with the scholarly traditions of IIUM, NIIS, and IIIT. This includes a dedicated focus on mentoring undergraduate and postgraduate students, sharing the lessons I learned to help navigate their own journeys. I also feel a deep responsibility to promote the values of ethical leadership—integrity, service, and accountability—in every space I occupy. My academic path will be directed toward producing meaningful research that addresses real societal needs, while my personal commitment extends to active participation in community development initiatives and interreligious understanding. The formative lessons from IIUM and my time with PGSS will remain a guiding compass, ensuring that my endeavours continue to reflect a commitment to collective purpose and betterment.

In conclusion, my leadership journey as an IIUM PhD student, IIIT scholarship recipient, and NIIS graduate has been transformative and deeply enriching. Each institution contributed uniquely to my development: NIIS provided the spiritual and ethical foundation, IIUM broadened my global understanding, and IIIT strengthened my intellectual mission. Together, they shaped my leadership identity and prepared me for future responsibilities in academia and community life. Leadership, as I have learned, is rooted in humility, sincerity, resilience, and a commitment to serve others. As I continue my academic journey, I do so with gratitude, a clear sense of purpose, and renewed dedication to contributing meaningfully to the Muslim ummah and the wider world.

Ramadan and the Purification of the Heart:

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO SEIZING THE MONTH OF CHANGE IN A DIVERSE WORLD



Br. Arafat Alemaran

*Master Student, AIKOL,
IIUM*

Every year, hearts yearn for the dawn of the blessed month of Ramadan, a period overflowing with tranquillity and mercy, offering a golden opportunity to reshape the self and purify the soul (tazkiyah an-nafs). In a vibrant academic environment like ours at IIUM, Ramadan emerges as a lush oasis providing the strength needed to face the challenges of living abroad and the rigours of academic life. Here, the "Garden of Knowledge and Virtue" meets the divine breezes of heaven, reminding us that a human being is both soul and body, and that the soundness of the intellect begins with the purity of the heart. This month marks a central turning point in a student's life, shifting from a purely material academic routine to a spiritual expanse that adds profound meaning and value to every effort in lecture halls and research labs.

The Virtue of Ramadan and the Role of Fasting in Spiritual Growth

Ramadan is the month that Allah the Almighty distinguished by making its fast one of the five pillars of Islam, and it is the month in which the Quran was revealed as a beacon for humanity. The virtues of this month are beyond description; it is a school of patience and a grand field of spiritual striving. The Prophet ﷺ said in a Hadith Qudsi: **"Every act of the son of Adam is for him, except for fasting, for it is for Me and I [alone] will reward for it"** (agreed upon). This divine exclusivity of -

fasting indicates that it is a "private" form of worship that cultivates within a student the values of "sincerity" (ikhlas) and self-monitoring—the most crucial traits for any seeker of knowledge. Purification in Ramadan is not merely refraining from food and drink; it is a comprehensive cleansing of the heart from the impurities of pride, laziness, and intellectual arrogance, replacing them with the light of certainty and high resolve. A student who realises that Allah monitors their fast will naturally feel that Allah monitors their academic integrity and sincerity in seeking knowledge to serve the ummah.

The Worship of Fasting and the Spirituality of Existential Need

When a student abstains from food and drink during the day, they engage in high-level practical training in "detachment" from material constraints. This detachment is the core of "existential poverty" expressed in the Holy Quran through the words of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him): "My Lord, truly I am in [desperate] need of whatever good You may send down to me" (28:24). In the midst of intensive study and the feverish academic race, we must declare our poverty and need for Allah's support and guidance; intelligence alone is not enough, and diligence without blessing (Barakah) may not bear fruit. Fasting, with its gentle hardship, softens the heart and prepares it to receive divine guidance. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Fasting is a shield" (Reported by Al-Bukhari); it protects the heart from the fires of desires and the mind from the fragmentation of thoughts and existential anxiety that might afflict an international student far from home. This sense of needing -

Allah fills the spiritual void that academic degrees and titles alone cannot satisfy.

The Holy Quran: The Student's Companion and Intellectual Lighthouse

Ramadan is preeminently the "Month of the Quran," as Allah says: "The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion"(2:185).. For a university student, the relationship with the Quran should not be a mere race to finish pages; it is a journey of systematic reflection and deduction. The Quran is the constitution that directs the mind toward sound thinking. Its recitation during the pre-dawn hours or after fajr grants the mind an incredible clarity, facilitating the comprehension of complex scientific problems. Furthermore, constant remembrance (dhikr) keeps the student's tongue moist with the mention of Allah amidst academic busyness, achieving the promised tranquility in the verse: "Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured" (13:28). A tranquil heart is the one most capable of creativity and innovation, as it operates from a firm foundation of faith and serenity, away from the psychological stress of fierce academic competition.

Tarawih and Night Prayers: A Respite for Souls and Community Building

After a long day of academic pursuit and exhausting lectures, Tarawih and night prayers (qiyam) serve as the spiritual station where students cast the world's burdens behind them. Standing in the rows of worshippers in the mosques, contemplating the verses of Allah recited in an atmosphere of humility, is the true antidote to exam stress and future anxiety. The Prophet ﷺ promised the virtue of qiyam, saying: "Whoever prays during the nights of Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven" (agreed upon). This forgiveness represents a "new birth" for the student, allowing them to start the next day with -

renewed energy and optimism. Moreover, congregational prayer in Ramadan strengthens the sense of belonging to one ummah, where the student dissolves into a community of worshippers, feeling that they are not alone in their journey abroad but part of a grand entity united by faith and a single qibla.

Generosity and Responsibility: Purification Through Giving

Purification in Islam is not about self-isolation; it is essentially about openness to others through excellence (Ihsan). The Prophet ﷺ was "the most generous of people, and he was even more generous during Ramadan" (reported by Al-Bukhari). This generosity extends beyond money to include time, knowledge, and empathy. For a student, this generosity can manifest as helping a classmate struggling with a subject, participating in communal iftar initiatives, or maintaining honesty and integrity in daily dealings. Ramadan teaches us that "human brotherhood" transcends race and language, and that serving creation is the shortest path to purifying the heart. This social responsibility helps polish the character of an "IIUM graduate" into a leader who recognises that their knowledge is not a personal possession but a trust to serve society and humanity at large.

Utilizing Time for Worship: A Practical Vision

The greatest challenge facing a student in Ramadan is "time management." Ramadan is not a month of sleeping during the day and wasting the night in idle talk; it is the month of "maximum productivity." Using the pre-dawn hours for prayer and study, and then investing the post-fajr hours in remembrance and Quran recitation, gives the day a tangible "blessing." The golden rule here is "renewing the intention"; when a student intends their fast and their search for knowledge to honour Allah's religion and the resurgence of the ummah, their long study hours in the library transform into "continuous worship." The -

discipline a student learns in adhering to the times of iftar and imsak is the same discipline that leads to outstanding academic success.

Proposed Daily Activity Schedule for the Student in Ramadan

Time	Suggested Activity	Spiritual & Pedagogical Value
Pre-Dawn (Suhur)	Suhur + Two Rak'ahs + Dua	Instilling the concept of needing Allah and sincere seeking of success.
After Fajr Prayer	Morning Adhkar + Quran Recitation	Utilizing the "blessing of early hours" for deep study or research.
Morning to Dhuhr	Attending Lectures + Assignments	Considering academic fatigue as a form of "striving" for beneficial knowledge.
After Dhuhr Prayer	Short Power Nap (20-30 mins)	Following the sunnah to rest the body and restore mental focus.
After Asr Prayer	Light Review + Quran or Connection	Preparing the soul with remembrance and Dua before the great iftar hour.
Before Iftar	Sincere Supplication	A time of humility; plead for the goodness of your heart and your success.
Maghrib to Isha	Moderate iftar + Rest + Family Connection	Balancing physical needs with social and family ties.
After Isha Prayer	Tarawih Prayers in the Mosque	Achieving tranquility, reflection, and connection with the Quran.
After Tarawih	Focused Study Session (2 hours)	Utilizing the mental and spiritual clarity after worship for achievement.



Get to Know **IIIT**:

Objectives and its **Focus** at **IIUM**

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) is a globally recognized academic organization dedicated to the revival and promotion of Islamic scholarship. Founded in 1981, IIIT aims to advance education, research, and intellectual discourse rooted in Islamic values and principles. The institute focuses on integrating Islamic thought with contemporary knowledge, offering support to scholars and students through research opportunities, publications, and scholarships. By fostering a deeper understanding of Islam in the modern world, IIIT plays a vital role in the development of Islamic education and intellectual growth across diverse fields. The institute offers scholarships to Muslim youth male and female across the globe.

Organizational Structure of the IIIT Students' Office



Prof. Dr. Dawood Abdulmalek Yahya Al-Hidabi
IIIT Scholarship Coordinator & Advisor



Br. Bishrul Rifath
IIIT Program & Assistant
to IIIT Advisor



Br. Arafat Amran
IIIT Students
Financial Officer



**Br. Boudoukha
Rached Lamraoui**
IIIT Programs Officer



**Sr. Norrohani
Binti Azizi**
Personal Assistant



Sr. Azha Nazeer
IIIT Alumni &
Magazine Officer

Vision

Thriving societies in which individuals have the opportunity to pursue and realize their fullest potential through transformative learning, social development, and personal growth.

Mission

To conduct and disseminate educational research to empower Muslim Societies with data-driven recommendations for transformative education policy and practice.

The primary objectives are:

Islamization of Knowledge

IIIT aims to integrate Islamic principles and values with contemporary knowledge in various fields such as social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. This objective seeks to develop a knowledge framework that is rooted in Islamic epistemology.

Promoting Islamic Scholarship

The institute supports the development of Islamic scholarship by publishing research, organizing seminars and conferences, and collaborating with universities and academic institutions globally.

Reform of Islamic Thought

IIIT is committed to the reform of Islamic thought, ensuring that Islamic teachings are interpreted and applied in ways that are relevant to contemporary issues.

Education and Curriculum Development

The institute focuses on developing educational curricula that are aligned with Islamic values and promoting educational reforms that integrate Islamic teachings.

Research and Publications

IIIT invests heavily in research and publication efforts, producing books, journals, and papers that address key issues in the Muslim world from an Islamic perspective.

IIIT's Focus at IIUM:

At the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), IIIT's focus includes:

Collaboration on Academic Programs

IIIT collaborates with IIUM in developing academic programs and curricula that integrate Islamic perspectives with modern disciplines, particularly in social sciences, humanities, and Law.

Research Support

IIIT provides support for research projects at IIUM that align with its objectives, particularly those focusing on the Islamization of Knowledge and the reform of Islamic thought.

Student and Faculty Development

The institute often conducts workshops, seminars, and training programs aimed at enhancing the intellectual and academic capabilities of IIUM students and faculty members. This include weekly training programs for IIIT sponsored students to revitalize their knowledge.

Promotion of Islamic Values

IIIT works closely with IIUM to promote Islamic values and ethics in education, research, and community engagement.

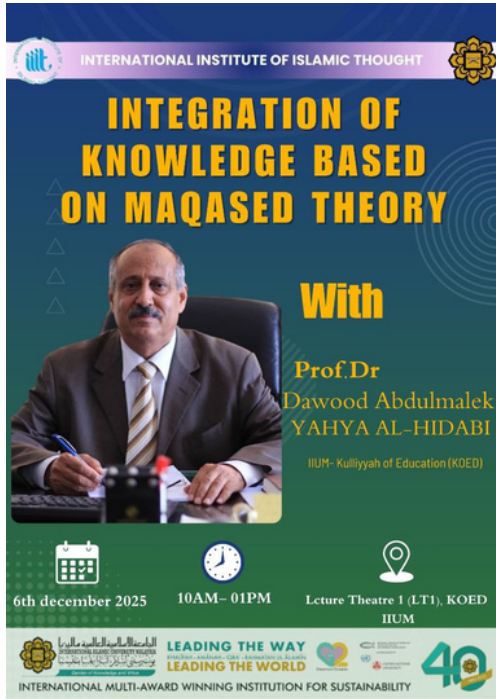
Publication and Dissemination of Knowledge

Through its publishing efforts, IIIT collaborates with IIUM to disseminate knowledge that reflects Islamic scholarship and thought, contributing to the university's academic environment.

To deepen collaboration with the IIUM community, it has introduced this magazine to provide a platform where intellectual and academic issues can be discussed through various writings by different authors, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and excellence.

IIIT STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES

DECEMBER 2025



Integration of Knowledge Based on Maqased Theory

| 6th December 2025

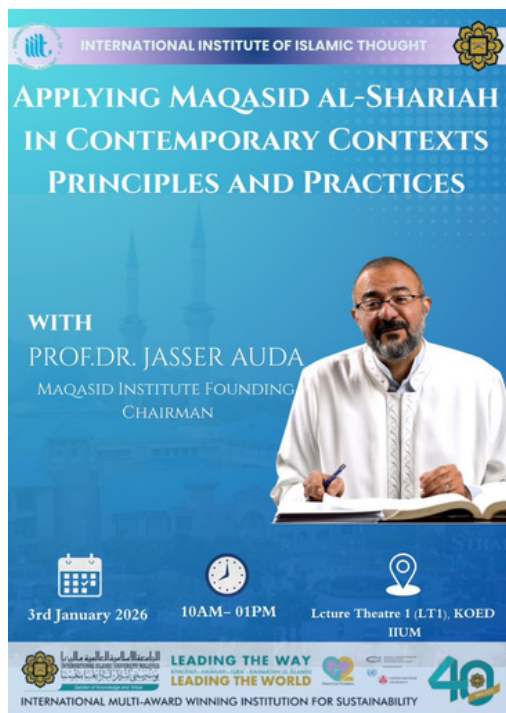


From Data to Publication: Mastering Qualitative Research Techniques (Session 2)

| 20th December 2025

IIIT STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 2026



Applying Maqasid Al-Shariah in Contemporary Contexts Principles and Practices

| 3rd January 2026



Power People and Piety: Rabbani Guide to Leadership

| 17th January 2026

IIIT STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 2026


TAWHIDIC EPISTEMOLOGY **UMMATIC EXCELLENCE**
 LEADING THE WAY LEADING THE WORLD
 KHULAYLAH, AMMAN - JORDAN - RAHMANIYAH (J. KSA)

Understanding Ramadan Beyond Fasting

WITH
PROF.DR. RADWAN JAMAL
YOUSUF ELATRASH
 ABDULHAMID ABUSULAYMAN KULLIYYAH
 OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE
 AND HUMAN SCIENCES



 **14th February 2026**
 **10AM- 01PM**
 **Auditorium B, Block E2
Kulliyyah of Engineering (KOE)**

 **INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT** 



Understanding Ramadan Beyond Fasting
| 14th February 2026

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
 «أَتَاكُمْ رَمَضَانُ شَهْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ، فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ صِيَامَهُ، تُفْتَحُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ، وَتُغْلَقُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ
 «الْجَحِيمِ، وَتُغَلُّ فِيهِ مَرَدَةُ الشَّيَاطِينِ، لِلَّهِ فِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ، مَنْ حُرِمَ خَيْرَهَا فَقَدْ حُرِمَ
 رَوْاهُ أَحْمَدُ وَالنَّسَائِيُّ.

Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as saying, "Ramadan, a blessed month, has come to you during which God has made it obligatory for you to fast. In it the gates of heaven are opened, the gates of al-Jahim are locked, and the rebellious devils are chained. In it God has a night which is better than a thousand months. He who is deprived of its good has indeed suffered deprivation."

Ahmad and Nasa'i transmitted it.



Pictorial



Prof. Dawood on Integration of Knowledge Based on Maqasid Theory Lecture



Graduation Ceremony of IIIT Graduates



Felicitations of KOED Graduates with The Dean and Members of KOED, ISTAC



Visit with Muath Trust Members, UK



With the Participants of the Intellectual Discourse Series, Maqasid Based Training on Leadership



Visit by the members of Mishqat Research Institute, Sri Lanka to facilitate Training & Development, Guidance on Islamic Based Educational Institutions and Starting of Research Journal



Prof Dawood training young leaders in a mosque in UK



Pictorial



Feedback and Felicitating Meeting with the IIIT-IIUM Halaqah Leaders



Handing over the NAMA Education Research Journal to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suhailah Hussien Dean, KOED



Prof Dawood visit to the UK



SISCO Leadership Training



Prof. Dawood received a certificate after completing the program



A photo session for all participants and speakers after the program

**From Madrasa to
the Best Student:
The Making of
Iftekhar Jamil Fuad**

**A Journey Beyond
Classroom:
Mohamed Imaz's
IIUM Story**



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