

Islamisation of the Self: The International Islamic University Malaysia Experience

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a brief study of how the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge (now defunct) at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) accelerated the knowledge of its academics to benefit its students by exegetically comprehending the Qur'ān through weekly discussions. The article is divided into two sections. *Ḥalaqah* and *'Ibādah* Camps are two non-formal education initiatives for 'Islamizing the Self', covered in the first section. Even though the term 'Islamising the Self' was not used explicitly, these initiatives centred on cultivating moral and spiritual excellence, an integral part of 'Islamising the Self'. The weekly *Ḥalaqah* sessions detail its operationalisation and the curriculum spread over four years. Under the *'Ibādah* camps, several themes included the concept of *'Ibādah*, Brotherhood, Islamic personality, social awareness and responsibility, *da'wah* (as a fundamental obligation), Islamic civilisation as a saviour, realising the Islamic ideals and social realities, and *istiqāmah* are analysed. The second section illustrates the 'Islamisation of the Self' by instilling various concepts and themes to be internalised and practised by students on campus and upon graduation as lifelong learning. It studies the qualities and characteristics of *'Ibād al-Raḥmān*, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, and *khalīfatullāh fī al-arḍ*, the attribute of *ulū al-albāb*, the issue of *tazkiyat al-naḥs*, *al-naḥs al-ammārah*, *al-naḥs al-muṭma'innah*, the culture of "say what you do," the phenomenon of *tijārah* and *anṣārullāh*, the concept of *al-birr* and *al-taqwā*, themes of *ḥubb al-Dunyā*, *amrāḍ al-qalb*, *al-falāḥ*, *amānah*, *shūrā*, *ibtīlā'* and *miḥnah*, *wasāṭiyyah*, utilising Arabic terms, a course on Philosophy of Islamic Ethics, deviant teachings, the phenomenon of *sū'al-ẓann*, unity and *ummah*, and congregational prayer advocated to be applied by students from 1983 to 1990. Finally, the article ends with a conclusion and recommendations.

Keywords: Islamisation of the Self, *Ḥalaqah*, *'Ibādah* Camps, moral and spiritual excellence, responsible human beings, *Murabbī* role.

INTRODUCTION

The International Islamic University Malaysia was established in 1983. This year (2023) marks its 40th anniversary. As the University celebrates its 40th anniversary, many programmes are being held in recognition of its achievements. It accomplished much and produced leaders, entrepreneurs, scholars, thinkers, intellectuals, and professionals who have contributed to the development of the nation as a whole, including the Muslim world. It offered humankind a

distinctive education methodology and approach to address current crises by experimenting with the fusion of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Knowledge as an alternative to secular knowledge. It also made progress towards achieving its goals after identifying Islamisation as one of the niche areas for the holistic development of the *ummah* and all of humanity. Therefore, this paper discusses the process with a focus on the 'Islamisation of the Self', which is one of the prerequisites for nurturing God-fearing, God-conscious, God-accountable, balanced, moderate, responsible, respectable and compassionate human beings to administer justice indiscriminately and enforce good governance with utmost sincerity to creating corruption-free systems and social order with peace and harmony as principal pillars.

Islamisation has been and is one of the priorities of the University ever since it was established. It is defined as a process more than just an intellectual exercise which also entails transforming the character, demeanour, attitude, ethics, and moral behaviour of students, academics and administrators, also known as 'Islamising the Self;' students and academics must be advocates for the Islamic worldview and perspectives. From 1983 to 1990, through non-formal educational programmes, the then Centre for Fundamental Knowledge (CFK), under the dynamic leadership of Mohd. Kamal Hassan - the author of the University's concept paper and third Rector, handled the task under the aegis of holistic Islamic personality development until it was transferred to the Student Affairs Division in 1990.

Thus, the academics sought to protect the general well-being and prosperity (*sejahtera*) and safeguard the public interest (*ummah's maṣlahah*) at all levels through the proper educational methodology and curriculum. They initiated to provide intellectual and civilisational responses to global complexities and problems through Islamic and professional courses, employing an integrated approach in teaching, learning, research and consultancy. They undertook the role of a *murabbī*, shaping, moulding, inspiring, nurturing, guiding, and leading students in accordance with Islamic religious beliefs, norms, guidelines and standards so they could become accountable, conscientious, competent, clean, corrupt-free, compassionate, honest, responsible and trustworthy individuals, leaders, scholars, and thinkers who would lead the world making it a better place for all to live, peacefully, honourably and harmoniously as indicated in the IIUM song, later. The University has embarked on 'leading the way' and 'leading the world' with additional objectives focussing on Sustainable Development Goals, the Triple I-CE and *Insan Sejahtera* (Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, 2019).

Murabbī is a role everyone should play; its importance cannot be taken for granted, undermined, or ignored. Exemplifying the *murabbī* stance must be the ethical responsibility of the Islamic university. This makes the Islamic university unique with a difference, which is evident from the University policy on Islamisation:

Islamisation or Islamicisation of the self is part and parcel of Islamicization/ Islamisation of Human knowledge (IOHK) in IIUM. It entails a continuous process of development and strengthening of *ʿIlm* (knowledge), *Imān* (faith), *Yaqīn* (certitude), *Taqwā* (God-fearing consciousness), *Iḥsān* (beneficence and moral excellence) and *Ḥusn al-Khuluq* (good character) in the personality and life of a *Mu'min* (believer) through the process of *Jihād al-Nafs* (striving against the influence of base desires, passion, and moral vices as well as temptations of worldly pleasures), *Tazkiyat al-Nafs* (purification of the spiritual heart and soul from a variety of spiritual and moral "diseases") (CENTRIS, Policy on Islamisation)

Recognising the effort in 'Islamising the Self' benefits students, faculty, stakeholders and the general public, locally and globally. It aided in educating students on the crucial events that occurred during the formative years. Hence, it is essential to document the history of the University for the future; besides formal, there were non-formal programmes that concentrated on various themes and concepts in 'Islamizing the Self' of students, which are continued in various forms till today. These non-formal programmes were developed based on the inspiration of the University's philosophy and as advocated by the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah in 1977, which specified integrating Islamic Revealed Knowledge with Human knowledge. Thus, the current study underlines the 'Islamisation of the self' process between 1983 and 1990 for future reference. Qualitative methodology is used. Descriptions, observations, content analyses from lectures, talks, speeches, files, minutes, video cassettes, comments on papers, and the author's direct participation in various programmes are extensively used and acknowledged to present the history of the 'Islamisation of the Self' programmes.

The article proceeds as follows: It begins with a discussion on accelerating the Islamisation of academics of the then Center for Fundamental Knowledge through the Qur'ān's exegetical discourse to benefit students who took courses and followed the non-formal programmes. The article is divided into two sections. The first section deals with non-formal education efforts for 'Islamising the Self', with two programmes: *Halaqah* and *'Ibādah* Camps. These focussed on developing moral and spiritual excellence as one of the primary initiatives for 'Islamising the Self,' although this phrase was not explicitly used during the formative period, besides nurturing leadership qualities. The weekly *Halaqah* sessions detailed its operationalisation, and the curriculum spread over four years is referred to. Under the *'Ibādah* camps, several themes included the concept of *'Ibādah*, Brotherhood, Islamic personality, social awareness and responsibility, *da'wah* (as a fundamental obligation), Islamic civilisation as a saviour, realising the Islamic ideals and social realities, and *istiqāmah* are mentioned.

The second section elaborates on the 'Islamisation of the Self' by instilling various vital concepts and themes practised by students on campus and upon graduation to awaken and educate the community in different parts of the world. It focuses on the qualities and characteristics of *'Ibād al-Raḥmān*, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, and *khalīfatullāh fī al-arḍ*, the attribute of *ulū al-albāb*, *tazkiyat al-naḥs*, *al-naḥs al-ammārah*, *al-naḥs al-muṭma'innah*, the culture of "say what you do," the concept of *tijārah* and *anṣārullāh*, the concept of *al-birr* and *al-taqwā*, avoidance of *ḥubb al-Dunyā*, ridding of *amrāḍ al-qalb*, *al-falāḥ*, *amānah*, *shūrā*, the concept of *ibtilā'* and *miḥnah*, the method of *wasāṭiyyah*, utilising Arabic terms, a course on Philosophy of Islamic Ethics, deviant teachings, the phenomenon of *sū'al-ḥann*, unity and *ummahism*, and congregational prayer. Finally, the article ends with a conclusion and recommendations.

ISLAMISATION THROUGH QUR'ĀNIC EXEGETICAL DISCOURSE

Realising proper understanding of the Qur'ān would enhance knowledge, intellectualism, morality and scholarship and Islamise oneself, the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge was concerned with its academics' Islamisation through intellectual growth and development, especially between 1983 and 1990, when academics were encouraged to take on the role of a *murabbī*.

Hence, the CFK instituted a weekly *ḥalaqah* (educational Circle) discussion for academics. Each academic staff was given the task of selecting a *tafsīr* from among al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Alūsī, al-Rāzī, al-Shawkānī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Naysābūrī, al-Marāghī, Ibn ʿĀshūr, Muhammed Asad, Sayyid Quṭb, Maududi and others. A short *sūrah* or a few verses from a longer *sūrah* was selected, and exegetical discussion followed in the Circle for everyone's benefit. The exegetical dialogue improved several Qur'ānic exegetes' explanations and interpretations among the academics, paving the way for them to improve their Qur'ānic scholarship and understand the Qur'ānic worldview. The Qur'ānic knowledge obtained in the academic staff *ḥalaqah* was shared among the *nuqabā'* and *naqībāt*, who in turn shared with their various *ḥalaqah* groups, in addition to enriching Qur'ānic scholarship and accelerating the 'Islamisation of the self'.

Recognising the significance of applying methodical approaches to the Qur'ān, academics were encouraged to foster, habituate, and retain students and faculty on paths of higher aspirations and excellence. Methodical approaches to studying the Qur'ān were regarded to improve Qur'ānic scholarship and be essential to Islamising oneself. As a result of the applied objective to achieve spiritual, intellectual, and moral excellence, campus spirituality was developed. A series of non-formal lectures by the University's distinguished scholars and invited speakers emphasised the importance of moral and spiritual excellence among staff and students as fundamental prerequisites for 'Islamising the self'. The revealed guidance contains remedies to all humanity's challenges and problems, not just the Muslim *ummah*, as some Muslims believe.

In addition to gaining profound religious knowledge through Qur'ānic exegetical discourse, which strengthens Islamisation, the importance of cultivating values of integrity, piety, probity, sincerity, fraternity, steadfastness, nobility, purity of thought, and intellectual ability as an integral part of 'Islamising the Self' was emphasised. Because of these capabilities and competencies, academics could invest completely in *amānah* (trust), producing a new generation of Muslim graduates capable of autonomously integrating Islamic Revealed Knowledge with Human Sciences and the Humanities, benefiting humankind.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR 'ISLAMISING THE SELF'

Futuristic in thought, action, and sustainable development of morality and spirituality, the need for moral and spiritual excellence was felt because the students, upon graduation, would become community leaders, heads of state and policymakers. Creating and instilling a thirst for honesty and integrity in graduates would deter corruption during their professional tenure because many leaders in the Muslim world were neither free from corruption nor interested in the well-being of their citizens. Hence, prioritising, considering and providing *tarbiyyah rūḥiyyah* (spiritual training) was indispensable for the success and sustainable development of the *ummah's* spirituality, producing Allah-fearing human beings aware of the need for accountability to the Creator. Therefore, a non-formal educational programme to supplement official curricula was implemented with a systematic syllabus. It was the first experience in a higher learning institution focused on spiritual sustainability, ultimately leading to self-Islamisation and producing perfect and dedicated human beings (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*). Two programmes were, therefore, implemented: *Ḥalaqah* sessions and *ʿIbādah* Camps.

***Ḥalaqah* Sessions (1983-1990)**

Ḥalaqah sessions for all students addressed the need for holistic leadership with comprehensive excellence committed to reforming and revitalising the Muslim *ummah*, as

explicitly stated later in the University mission, but with a focus on manifesting morals and spiritual excellence, one of the instruments of sustaining spirituality, otherwise known as 'Islamising the Self', which had no precedent locally or internationally, receiving the support and recognition of many global Muslim thinkers. *Ḥalaqah* sessions also provided a place for participants to engage in conversations and discussions and share their expertise and experience to improve their speaking and debating skills (Commemoration Volume, pp. 29-29).

Students were divided into small groups called *ḥalaqah*, supervised and monitored by student leaders (*naqīb/naqībah*) who followed a unique curriculum focused on studying the Qur'ān, Sunnah, selected books, and contemporary human challenges. The curriculum had comprehensively developed moral, spiritual, intellectual excellence, and leadership qualities relating to classical and modern issues. Each academic staff was in charge of about five or six *ḥalaqah* groups.

Nuqabā' and *naqībāt* attended weekly *ḥalaqah* with their respective supervisors, who discussed the curriculum in order to improve competence and confidence in leaders who faced concerns and problems posed by students. Weekly sessions were held, and supervisors were required to keep records. Marks were given for required attendance and credited to each semester's courses.

The *ḥalaqah* curriculum was designed to last four years. The syllabus was divided into two divisions: one for members of the *ḥalaqah* and another for *nuqabā'* and *naqībāt*. There were 20 sessions per annum. Students must attend all sessions and attendance and participation were graded. *Nuqabā'* and *naqībāt* were in charge of keeping attendance records for their respective groups' members.

Yusuf Ali's *Translation of the Qur'ān*, Sayyid Qutb's *In the Shades of the Qur'ān*, and chosen portions of Maududi's *The Meaning of the Qur'ān* were prescribed for frequent debates for members' *ḥalaqah*. To examine and discuss diverse issues, Imām al-Nawawī's *Forty Ḥadith* and al-Tabrizī's *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* were given. Maududi's *Let Us Be Muslims*, Muhammad Zakariyya's *Virtues of Salāh*, Khurshid Ahmad's *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, Maududi's *Towards Understanding Islam*, Ashraf Ali Thanawi's *A General Introduction to Islam*, Muhammad Zakariyya's *Virtues of Dhikr*, and Muhammad al-Ghazālī's *Muslim Character* were assigned as crucial books for students' *ḥalaqah*. Students had done their homework and shared their knowledge with other members, who were allowed to ask questions followed by discussions. The students' participation was phenomenal and incredible. They usually looked forward to the subsequent sessions with great enthusiasm, anticipation and excitement. (Commemoration Volume, pp. 34-56)

As leaders of *ḥalaqah* groups, *nuqabā'* and *naqībāt* were required to master their knowledge, skills and expertise to administer and conduct discussions smoothly with their *ḥalaqah* members, and a different syllabus was employed for them. The *nuqabā'* and *naqībāt* met with their supervisors to discuss the specified syllabus, allowing them to pass on their knowledge to their *ḥalaqah* members. The syllabus for *nuqabā'* and *naqībāt* concentrated on Sayyid Qutb's *In the Shades of the Qur'ān*, Maududi's *The Meaning of the Qur'ān* and Muḥammad 'Alī al-Sābūnī's *Safwat al-Tafāsīr*, Manzoor Nomani's *Ma'ārif al-Ḥadīth*, and Imām al-Nawawī's *Riyāḍ al-Sāliḥīn*, were recommended (*ibid*).

Sayyid Qutb's *The Characteristics of the Islamic Concept*, Maududi's *The Four Qur'anic Terms*, Hamidullah Abdalati's *Islam in Focus*, A.D. Ajojola's *The Essence of Faith in Islam*, Ahmad Zaki Hammad's "God in the Qur'an" in *Islamic Horizon*, Imām al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Abdul Majid Aziz al-Zandani's *Kitāb al-Tauḥīd*, Muhammad Zakariyya's *Virtues of Salah*, Ashraf Ali Thanawi's *A General Introduction to Islam*, and Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī's *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism* were the central focus. All the exegeses and books mentioned above had to be finished for all participants to master essential issues (*ibid*).

The *ḥalaqah* sessions over four years focussed on issues crucial to Islamising the self and developing leadership skills and qualities. The curriculum for Islamizing oneself covered topics like sincerity and intention behind all actions, *shahādātayn* and its significance, principal tenets of Islam, innovation in religion, *'ibādah* and its meaning and concept, tendering good advice, injunction for regular observation of the Prophet's practice and its conditions, acceptance of *ṣadaqah* and *du'ā*, the concept of *akhlāq* and its inter-relationship with man, piety and discarding doubtful, *tawhīd*, rendering good advice, honouring the guest, *ikhlaṣ al-niyyah*, self-control, softness, tolerance and kindness, warning against envy, divine surveillance, modesty, the danger of *kufr*, perseverance in religion, *al-ṣalāh*: its meaning and blessing, excellence of *dhikr Allāh*, harmful deed, back-biting, enjoining virtue and forbidding evil, belief in life after death, grace and the mercifulness of Allah, excellence of *zuhd* (indifference) to the world, *ṣalāt al-jamā'ah* and its virtues, prohibition of breach of faith (treachery/treason), excellence of education, *kadhib* (lying), preaching and admonition, *khushū'* in *ṣalāh*, actions in the way of Allah, *takabbur* (arrogance), duty towards neighbours, passions, bribery, peace and dissension, greeting, remembrance of Allah, administration of justice, manifestation of extremism, cause of extremism, emphasis on allegorical texts, lack of insight in history, duties of young Muslims, knowledge, values and actions, sympathetic understanding of the abilities, limitations and circumstances of others and advice to Muslim youth (*ibid*).

***'Ibādah* Camps (1983-1988)**

'Ibādah camps with specific themes were considered imperative to Islamising the individual and were required at the beginning of each semester. The themes of *'Ibādah* camps almost corresponded to courses offered every semester. Thus, the camp activities assisted students in better understanding the forthcoming formal courses and improving their religious consciousness and devotion, thus 'Islamising the Self' in specific ways. Each student would attend eight *'Ibādah* camps prior to graduation to nurture religio-moral and spiritual excellence. Each camp lasted three days and two nights, during which all academic staff collaborated with students in organisation, lectures, forums, demonstrations of specific rituals, community service and games. They were required to pray in congregation, recite the Qur'ān in small groups and sometimes with translation, attend *qiyām al-layl*, pray *taḥajjud* and *witr*, recite *al-Ma'thūrāt*, and fast.

Academic staff attended and monitored all *'Ibādah* camp talks and lectures from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. They stayed with them and played games with them in the afternoon. Because of the focused commitment of the University's academic community, this curriculum significantly impacted students. It was considered the ideal approach for faculty and students to share their experiences, understand one another, and treat the University community as a robust family. Regular participation in the *'Ibādah* camps brought about many positive changes and improved student character and personality.

Lectures and discussions in *‘Ibādah* camps focused on human relations, interactions, Brotherhood, and cultivating moral, spiritual, intellectual, and leadership characteristics, which remained an unattainable goal in many regions of the Muslim world. Hence, the speeches aimed to set students on a path of righteousness by equipping them with skills necessary to achieve and maintain spiritual excellence as role models throughout their professional careers, empowering them to be corrupt-free individuals and consequently create a corrupt-free society and nation.

The phrase *tahdhīb al-akhlāq* [character refining or rearing] dominated the discussions in connection to the refinement of individual character with a particular emphasis on students. It was used to motivate students and faculty. Thus, the campus was surrounded by a distinct ecosystem where students could immerse in a proper Islamic setting, as the University’s founding fathers envisioned. Thanks to the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge.

The Concept of *‘Ibādah* in Islam

As mentioned above, relevant themes were developed for each *‘Ibādah* camp in harmony with courses taught each semester. It was prioritised because *‘ibādah* is fundamental to Islam. ‘The Concept of *‘Ibādah* in Islam’ was the first camp’s theme. The importance of imparting Islamic Knowledge while offering opportunities for students to develop public speaking and leadership skills was recognised. Discourses thus focussed on *‘ibādah*, and students acquired considerable knowledge and extensive understanding of the subject. Following attendance, students began to observe regular *ṣalāh* in congregation along with other *‘ibādāt* prescribed by Islam. It was not an exaggeration to say that the campus fully embodied the spiritual ecosystem (*‘Ibādah* Camp I, File 1983).

The establishment of non-formal programmes fulfilled the objectives as expounded by the First World Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah in 1977:

The aim of Muslim education is the creation of the ‘good and righteous man’ who worships Allāh in the true sense of the term, builds up the structure of his earthly life according to the *Sharī‘ah* (law) and employs it in the service of his faith.

Hence, the meaning of worship comprehensively entails activities that go beyond religious rituals in conformity with the Qur’ān: “*I have only created jinns and men that they may serve Me*” (Qur’ān, 51:56) and “*Say, ‘Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life, and my death, are (all) for Allāh, the Cherisher of the Worlds’*” (Qur’ān, 6:162). This is the explanation of worship that penetrated the hearts of *‘Ibādah* camp participants.

The first *‘Ibādah* Camp was held in 1983. Its opening ceremony witnessed the following address by Mohd. Kamal Hassan, the author of the concept paper of the University, Shaikh al-Kullīyyah of the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge, as well as the third Rector:

We realise that formal education in the lecture theatre, tutorials, and laboratories is effective in the transfer and accumulation of knowledge but in itself is inadequate to achieve the goals of Islamic education. True success calls for the integration of formal and non-formal programs. The good and righteous personality whom our crisis-torn society cries out for can only be formed by an integrated educational program that develops intellectual, spiritual, and moral

behaviours through the principle of submission to the will of Allāh. (CFK Commemoration Volume, Message from the First Dean of CFK).

Brotherhood in Islam

Brotherhood was perceived to be misunderstood; therefore, it became the focus of the second camp, with 'Brotherhood in Islam' as a significant theme. The emphasis was on Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic instances of brotherhood (*'Ibādah* Camp II, File 1983). Following this camp, participants better understood and practised the brotherhood notion regularly with zeal and enthusiasm and raised consciousness about the outcomes of discrimination. Students were given numerous opportunities to participate in conversations. The campus evolved into a macro-family, with brothers and sisters investing in every area. Students and faculty were friendlier, and there was minimal sign of inferiority or superiority among students and faculty. Equality and fraternity based on *ukhuwwah islāmiyyah* became the University's prevailing praxis.

The necessity to actualise the concept of Brotherhood among students on campus was highly indispensable as there were students from different parts of the world. Thus, the following verse was often quoted: "*The believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers: And be conscious of Allāh, that you may receive Mercy*" (Qur'ān, 49:10). The implications of Brotherhood that there should be no discrimination based on colour, complexion, race, nationality, ethnicity, or other artificial barriers were brought to the students' attention, realisation and implementation. Furthermore, this passage opposes nationalism in its narrow meaning of ethnocentrism. Another verse in this regard is:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allāh has full Knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Qur'ān, 49:13).

According to the verse, the Creator honours only the most righteous, but this is not based on artificial criteria set by men.

The Islamic Brotherhood prohibits insulting, scoffing, laughing, or mocking one another. Muslims are not permitted to malign or undermine one another, nor are they permitted to talk cynically or sarcastically. They are warned not to call someone by offensive nicknames. This aids in eradicating distrust and scepticism, both of which are detrimental social diseases. Backbiting, uncertainty, misunderstanding, speculation, conjecture, and mistrust were discouraged. The students were alerted that mutual respect, trust, care, compassion, and confidence from the Brotherhood concept would foster a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable society, leading to holistic development. In doing this, the following verses were cited:

O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong. O you who believe! Avoid

suspicion as much (as possible), for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it... But fear Allāh: for Allāh is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. (Qur'ān, 49:11-12)

These verses warn people about the consequences of failing to correctly adopt the Islamic concept of the Brotherhood. The University's mission was and is for students and staff to embody this concept as enthusiastic role models. As a result, Malaysian and international students and staff were fraternal, and the fraternal atmosphere was sustained.

Developing Islamic Personality

The need for developing a holistic Islamic personality (*shakhṣiyyah Islāmiyyah*), often lacking in Muslim communities, was observed. Many Muslims exalted secularism as the ideal, maybe because they were uninformed of secularism's negative impacts and implications. Furthermore, postmodernism has caused difficulties in developing the Islamic religious personality by instilling a liberal culture and worldview. This concept existed, but not in the Islamic sense, as external pressures in numerous sectors undermined it. Secularism was tolerated and hailed as a fundamental concept required for long-term world progress. In the midst of this confusion and misunderstanding, it was believed vital to instil in students the true Islamic personality. As a result, 'The Development of Islamic Personality' was proposed as the third-semester focus for students ('*Ibādah* Camp III, File 1984). This curriculum emphasised the Islamic personality in a university setting by highlighting the biography (*sīrah*) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the application of his examples.

Role of '*Ibādah* in Islamic Personality and Social Development

'*Ibādah* served as the foundation of individual and social development. The consistent performance of '*ibādah* with complete *khushū'* (devotion and attention) would be beneficial and satisfying. As a result, the fourth semester's theme, 'The Role of '*ibādah* in Islamic Personality and Social Development,' was chosen ('*Ibādah* Camp IV, File 1984). During the opening session, the speaker called everyone's attention to '*ibādah* as the key to Islamic personality development and a just, balanced, and moderate society. Individuals from all sustainable efforts must be developed in accordance with Islamic principles, values, and injunctions. Hence, '*ibādah* is a crucial societal principle. Everyone was encouraged to focus on this dimension until every activity became an act of worship. Because Allāh asserts that He created man to worship or serve Him, '*ibādah* is the most effective way to do so, with a superlative degree of gratitude and the highest order of humility for Allāh's grace and compassion. An Islamic personality would avoid ostentation and haughtiness, establish his prayer in congregation, have community consciousness, and voluntarily participate in community engagement activities, ensuring the well-being and prosperity (*kesejahteraan*) of the people because, for a believer, every activity performed in the name of Islam is considered '*ibādah* (an act of worship) for which there is a reward from the Creator.

***Da'wah*: A Fundamental Islamic Obligation**

The graduates of the University were expected not merely to be excellent professionals but also to fulfil another crucial religious obligation: the mission of *da'wah*, without which the message of Islam would go unnoticed. They must advance their religion as a 'complete way of life' so that others recognise Islam as vital for harmonious relationships and community harmony in multi-

racial/ethnic nations such as Malaysia. The myth that *da‘wah* should only be performed by religious academics or ‘*ulamā’* has been dispelled. *Da‘wah* was taught to students as a duty of every Muslim. The theme ‘*Da‘wah: A Fundamental Islamic Obligation*’ was introduced for fifth-semester students to instil this concept (*‘Ibādah* Camp V, File 1985). This discourse inspired students with the following verses:

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting [people] to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to attain felicity. (Qur’ān, 3:104)

You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allāh. If only the People of the Book had faith, it was best for them; among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors. (Qur’ān, 3:110)

All *‘ibādah* camp participants were encouraged to think about and implement these verses daily. Every Muslim is required to execute the mission of *da‘wah*. The *ummah* is best when it enforces right and forbids wrong without expecting recompense. Suppose the *da‘wah* mission is carried out with the utmost sincerity. In that case, it will result in the best understanding of Islam’s message, avoiding misconceptions leading to extremism and eradicating ambiguities.

Islamic Civilisation: Saviour for Mankind

The 1980s corresponded to the Islamic *Hijrah* calendar’s first decade of the 15th century. In honouring this historical event, talks were given on the significance of Prophet Muhammad’s *Hijrah* (migration from Makkah to Madinah) in order to accelerate awareness among students and arouse their interest in the Prophet’s biography. Lessons from his life were easily applicable to their own. In addition to recognising the Prophet’s hardships and sacrifices in establishing the Islamic community in Madinah, the golden period of Islamic civilisation’s achievements of matchless scientific advancement in all disciplines of knowledge, from Spain to Iraq, was also highlighted.

Consequently, the theme for third-year students was ‘Islamic Civilisation: Saviour for Mankind’ (sixth *‘Ibādah* camp) (*‘Ibādah* Camp VI, File 1985). Students were introduced to the lives of Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, and others whose contributions to humanity were diverse. Students were also encouraged to cultivate holistically oriented personalities and mindsets in the style of our forefathers, particularly during the Abbasid period, described as the “Golden Period of Islamic Civilisation.”

Social Realities and Islamic Ideals

Students were urged not to be obsessed as theorists or idealists but as realists. The concept of the blind following (*taqlīd*) and superstitious components (*Khurāfāt*) was never advocated. Students were instructed to maintain a sensible balance (*tawāzun*) between societal realities and Islamic values because they were future leaders of their different countries.

‘Social Realities and Islamic Ideals’ was chosen as the theme for the seventh semester to allow students to gain in-depth knowledge of both worlds (*‘Ibādah* Camp VII, File 1986). The goal was to keep students from becoming obsessed with religious ideals. The University did not aim for students to graduate with a spiritual perspective that did not consider earthly realities. As

a result, before applying Islamic ideas, the latter were to be adequately grasped and understood, as otherwise, discord and confusion would engulf society.

“Stand Firm as You are Commanded”

Students, upon graduation, were to be firm, steadfast (*istiqāmah*) and sincere (*ikhhlās*) in their commitments, official tasks, and religious obligations since they were learned and resolute beings, and carelessness led to frustration and failure. One will never reach his/her aim if late and irresponsible, recklessly uninformed of responsibilities, or inaccurate in their faith. The phrase *istiqāmah* (steadfastness) is used in the Qur’ān to motivate students and faculty to cultivate this outstanding characteristic by applying it to all human contacts and transactions. Hence, the theme for the final semester was: “*Therefore stand firm as you are commanded*” (Qur’ān, 11:112) (‘*Ibādah* Camp VIII, File 1987).

Speeches delivered to the first batch of graduating students during the ‘*Ibādah* Camp VIII, held in Port Dickson, urged them to be resilient in following Islamic injunctions and not to be swayed by falsehood and vanities (*al-zūr*), worldly temptations (*al-ghurūr*), and enticements. Continuous use of this verse motivated them to uncompromisingly apply Islamic ideas, principles, essentials, fundamentals, and values without regard for the circumstances. To avoid overwhelming the vanities, this verse was mentioned, “*Those who witness no falsehood, and if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honourable (avoidance)*” (Qur’ān, 25:72).

Islamic Leadership Training Course (1989-1990)

In order to accord a more dynamic connotation to the programmes of ‘*Ibādah* camp, its new name was proposed, i.e., Islamic Leadership Training Course (ILTC). The new name of ILTC, as a replacement for the ‘*Ibādah* camp, was used in the First Course of August 1989. With the change, certain adjustments were made to the theme, motto and others to suit the spirit of ILTC. The second Rector, Abdul Hamid AbuSulayman, suggested this change since he believed there was a leadership crisis in the Muslim mind and that students needed to be provided with competencies in leadership and abilities to lead (the world). Two themes from ‘*Ibādah* camps were maintained. The new themes were *The Concept of Leadership in Islam*, *The Development of Islamic Personality for Future Leadership*, *The Prophet Muhammad (saw) as a Leader Par Excellence*, *The Formation of an Islamic Dā‘i*, *Revival of Islamic Intellectual Leadership*, and *Challenges to Islam Today*.

The above themes alerted and stimulated students on the significance and characteristics of Islamic leadership needed for the Muslim world as it suffered from dedicated cum competent Islamic leadership with a vision to lead it towards sustainable development of the *ummah*. They also nurtured in students the qualities and characteristics of an Islamic leader who could practice Islamic values and manifest them, upholding justice as the *Khalīfah* of Allah with compassion and mercy in their professional lives. In other words, they were to apply later the concept and meaning of *Raḥmatan Li’l ‘Ālamīn*, known as KhAIR values. The unprecedented challenges Islam faced awakened the students to look for competent and Islamically committed leaders for the *ummah*. The leadership crisis existed due to the absence of a proper understanding of the role of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the uncompromising leader with a superlative degree of compassion and mercy who successfully governed the people of various belief systems and religions, which the students realised through attending these courses. The ILTC drew attention to the need for the revival of Islamic intellectual leadership, thus moving

forward to expedite the integration of Islamic Revealed Knowledge with Human Knowledge and championing the cause of reforming contemporary Islamic thought (*Iṣlāḥ al-fikr al-Islāmī*).

CORE CONCEPTS FOR ISLAMISING THE SELF

The University tasked the CFK with Islamising the students' self through non-formal education activities and fostering numerous core concepts that contributed to Islamising the self. These concepts were instilled in students through informal talks, lectures, discussions and forums, including weekly *Halaqah* sessions and semesterly *'Ibādah* camps. The following explores key concepts and themes for Islamizing the Self between 1983 and 1990 in the University.

Moulding Students as *'Ibād al-Raḥmān*

The Qur'ānic term *'ibād al-Raḥmān* was used in its broadest definition, and students at the University were called to read, comprehend, and put the meaning into practice. They were taught that only the inspiration from the Qur'ān could regenerate Allāh-conscious, Allāh-fearing, and Allāh-accountable human beings, thereby Islamising oneself and benefiting humankind by putting admirable values and virtues in place. Hence, speeches were delivered to students inspiring them to be obedient and submissive to the Most Merciful and Gracious: "*And the servants of (Allāh) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"*" (Qur'ān, 25: 63). It inspired students to become *'ibād al-Raḥmān* in the truest sense.

Several arguments implied that when addressing uninformed and ignorant people, one must have a gentle demeanour, as made explicit by the Qur'ān. Indeed, the Qur'ān advocates peace in all circumstances, so intelligent Muslims follow this policy. Students were assisted in transforming into Allāh's servants or obedient, who would walk in utmost humility without ostentation, arrogance, or haughtiness when dealing with the ignorant within the framework of peace and harmony, as one of the Islamising processes of the self requires humility in all human relations and a walking manner. Conversing, chatting, interacting, speaking, communicating, arguing, debating, discussing and engaging should occur with peace and compassion, which is the quality of *'ibād al-Raḥmān*.

Students were continually urged to refer to the attributes and characteristics of *'ibād al-Raḥmān*, as stated in verses 25: 64 -77 of the Qur'ān. Many students memorised these verses, recited them in prayer, and discussed them in classes and group discussions. The students recited, analysed, and internalised these verses throughout their conversations. Students were encouraged to read it, consider its significance, and then put these attributes into action. Every University graduate was supposed to become *'ibād al-Raḥmān* and keep this *status quo* for the rest of their lives. Because the campus was so enlightened, it included both features in order to establish prosperous and balanced communities of the highest moral order. Without a doubt, it is highly commendable. An *'ibād al-Raḥmān* with all qualities inherent in the verse will be *Raḥmatan Li'l 'Ālamīn*.

Transforming Students into *al-Insān al-Kāmil*

The University envisioned a perfect and wholly Allah-obedient *ummah* with an absolute commitment to the causes of Allāh as a fully transformed, mature human being. Hence, discussions frequently reflected the necessity to generate *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (ideal or wholesome person) capable of overcoming the extraordinary obstacles and unprecedented

challenges of secularism, provincial, parochial and territorial nationalism, and other man-made tenets. For generations, Muslims had succumbed to the onslaught of these doctrines and ideologies, and the Islamic educational curriculum paid little attention to addressing this issue. Indeed, there appeared to be complete obliviousness to the perils emanating from the Secular culture.

Although all humans are created and nurtured by Allāh (the Creator and the Master – the Omnipotent, the Omni Scient and the Omnipresent), many people select different faiths or ideologies based on the divine gift of free will. Nonetheless, another aim of ‘Islamising the self’ was the creation of a new species of *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, a breed that would recognise Muslims’ responsibility and role in guiding and leading humanity. The role of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* was intended to inspire students to become authentic *khalīfahs* of Allāh on earth. Students were instructed to serve the *ummah* and treat individuals of other faiths equally and respectfully. A balanced perspective of adult humans as agents of Allah who disseminate Islam’s message of peace was stressed. The students realised the significance of dedicating their lives to carrying out the well-being of all people (*sejahtera*) as a divinely bestowed task. According to Islam, humans should be just and equitable to all in all circumstances, regardless of religious creed, affiliation, or orientation.

Someone who demonstrates God-consciousness, righteousness, honesty, humility, sincerity, justice, moderation, spirituality, ethical behaviour, morality, integrity, trustworthiness, and accountability to Allāh is referred to as *al-Insān al-Kāmil*. *Ākhirah* (belief in the Afterlife) consciousness has the power to protect a person against corruption, pride, arrogance, ostentation, and haughtiness, among other things. The notion of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* in the University was cultivated with the hope that graduates would transmit the Creator’s message worldwide without fanatical or extremist fixation or excess and that they would stay on and sustain Islam’s middle path or method of moderation. Ideal Muslims oppose extremism, fanaticism, radicalism, and terrorism. The United Nations SDG 16 states to establish peace, including harmony and tranquillity. *Al-Insan al-Kmil* must work to bring peace by applying all the above attributes.

Making Students Allah’s *khalīfah*

The concept of *khalīfah* is an integral part of the KhAIR values manifested in the University’s Sejahtera Academic Framework (Lihana Borhan *et al.* (ed.), 2021); however, it has been emphasised since the establishment of the University. In non-formal talks, students were educated and reminded that man is *khalīfah* based on a verse from *sūrat al-Baqarah*: “Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: ‘I will create a vicegerent on earth’” (Qur’ān, 2:30). Students must assume the role of Allah’s vicegerent (deputy, agent, or representative) and carry out all divinely assigned responsibilities unhesitatingly without any reservation, scepticism and self-interest. They would defend and practise Islam’s fundamental values and essence and work as change agents under divine guidance. Students must understand that they will face a difficult task: rebuilding society from within and without in the face of arrogant Western imperialism and its disregard for their final encounter with Allah Almighty. The dangers and implications of secularism and postmodernism were underlined to help students manage their lives so that, as *khalīfah*, they could confront and overcome secular ills as quickly as possible, aided by the worldview of Islam. It has been disputed whether to pay attention to unprecedented issues arising from modernisation and liberal irresponsibility.

Instilling the Attribute of *ulū al-albāb*

Indeed, the need to understand the *ulū al-albāb* was crucial in general and in the context of the University. The phrase refers to people of understanding, educated or intellectual individuals, or wise humans. The IIUM is not an ordinary institution known for focusing solely on academic achievement and excellence while ignoring moral and spiritual concerns. The University is expected to cultivate praiseworthy characters and attributes stated in the Qur'ān in addition to academic success in all disciplines of knowledge.

Despite unwaveringly recognising the importance of education and academic excellence in all fields of knowledge, sciences, and technology, the University envisioned the community as *ulū al-albāb*, intelligent, wise, moderate, sensible and responsible people who understand current needs and strive to solve them using the Qur'ānic worldview and plan for the futures. In other words, University students in particular, and employees in general, should understand the passages describing *ulū al-albāb*, absorb and actualise their importance, and embody all of *ulū al-albāb*'s traits.

Ulū al-albāb refers to anyone who uses intellect to contemplate Allah's creation and is endowed with insight and proper understanding, who conducts fair assessment without discrimination between people, who are mature in their thinking, capable of making the right decisions based on Islamic critical thinking, intelligent and is sound in mind to consider the reality of things on the ground, and employs their reason to find the right journey to happiness and think critically.

In the context of the University, *ulū al-albāb* is an individual who not only integrates Islamic Revealed Knowledge with Human Knowledge in the spirit of *Iqra'bismi Rabbika* but also conveys the meaning and significance of fostering students. They assume the role of Islamic leadership, replace corrupt and selfish leadership that applies nepotism and develop their nations according to Islamic principles of holistic and sustainable development and comprehensive excellence to restore the lost glory of Islamic civilisation and dignity to their people to lead the world.

Among the many chosen verses touching the notion of *ulū al-albāb* were presented, clarified, and called on the community to comprehend the meaning and reflect the essence with their intellect. *Sūrat al-Baqarah*:197, *Sūrat Āli 'Imrān*:7 and 190, *Sūrat al-Mā'idah*:100, *Sūrat Yūsuf*: 111, *Sūrat Ibrāhīm*: 52, *Sūrat al-Zumar*: 18 and 21 and *Sūrat al-Ṭalāq*: 10 were often quoted. Indeed, students were encouraged to grasp the concept and embark on the role of *ulū al-albāb*, meaning that they use their intellect to analyse, investigate, and solve humanity's problems.

One verse drew the attention of the students, "... say *"We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord"; and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding"* (*Sūrat Āli 'Imrān*: 7). The verse explains that the belief in the Book should be complete as it declares, "*the whole of it is from our Lord.*" There shall be no doubt about the wholesomeness and the purity of the Book if readers are men of insight (*ulū al-albāb*), and only such people may perceive the Divine Message. As a result, in order to have complete faith in Revelation, one must be among the *ulū al-albāb*.

Another verse is, "*Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day are indeed Signs for men of understanding...*" (*Sūrat Āli 'Imrān*: 190). The verse

represents Allah's vast plan, which is impossible for uninformed, illiterate, uneducated or ignorant people to understand and appreciate the Creator's work. While providing interpretation, students were urged to consider the creation of the heavens and the earth and the cycle of night and day. This Sign could only be understood by individuals of understanding (*ulū al-albāb*). If one is attentive to Allah and studies natural events as a thinking person (*ulū al-albāb*), these Signs can help one understand the Reality in the cosmos. Hence, students were invited to join the ranks of *ulū al-albāb*, allowing them to appreciate the great design and finally causing them to fear Allah, accept His Message, and transmit it to others as an obligation, thus safeguarding the people from all forms of calamities in both worlds.

The Qur'ānic narratives are true historical events and incidents, not myths or fabrications intended to help people understand faith, particularly the *ulū al-albāb*. The verse states, "*There is, in their stories, instruction for men endued with understanding. It is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what went before it, a detailed exposition of all things, and a Guide and a Mercy to any such as behave*" (*Sūrat Yūsuf*: 100). Academics and students were urged to believe the Qur'ānic narratives when explaining the verse since they include significant teachings and counsel for *ulū al-albāb*. Only *ulū al-albāb* will have clarity since they can comprehend. All students and faculty were encouraged to take on the role of *ulū al-albāb*.

The other two verses explained, "*Say, 'Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle thee, so, fear Allah O ye that understand! That (so) ye may prosper*" (*Sūrat al-Mā'idah*: 100), and "*Allah has prepared for them a severe Punishment (in the Hereafter). Therefore, fear Allah, O ye men of understanding Who have believed! For Allah hath indeed sent down to you a Message*" (*Sūrat al-Ṭalāq*: 10). According to Revelation, the message here is that only *ulū al-albāb* would grasp the consequences of their immoral behaviour and be aware of the dreadful punishment they would suffer in the Hereafter. For Islamisation of the Self, this is necessary.

Emphasising *Tazkiyat al-nafs*

Tazkiyat al-nafs was the most commonly used Arabic phrase. (Purification of the soul). Following the presentation of examples from the Qur'ān and Prophet Muhammad's life and Muslim scholars and thinkers, students engaged in conversations, expressing their perspectives and experiences since some were adult students from various government departments, including the police force. Students were drawn to read these verses and translate them into practice: "*And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right; Truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it!*" (Qur'ān, 91:8-10). Students were urged to contemplate the meaning by referring to various exegeses of the Qur'ān. Indeed, the audiences were inspired, and emphasis was made on the purification of the soul: whosoever purifies his soul will succeed, and whosoever corrupts it will fail. Mohd. Kamal Hassan would frequently cite this verse to illustrate the significance and implications of *tazkiyat al-nafs*.

Resisting *al-Nafs al-Ammārah*

The discussions also reminded students and faculty of the three types of souls described in the Qur'ān. The first is the commanding or evil commanding soul, *al-nafs al-ammārah*. This *nafs* motivates a person to sin: "*Indeed, the nafs overwhelmingly command a person to sin*" (Qur'ān, 12: 53). This *nafs* has control over the self. It tells someone what to do. It results in sin and corruption. This *nafs*'s owner is unable to follow his logic. When the *nafs* has a desire, it

dominates a person and directs him. This *nafs* has control over a person. A person is subjected to it if the *nafs* is *ammārah*. He will submit it. A human will obey the *nafs*' orders and demands. As a result, a person will voluntarily sin. Students were informed about the risks and ramifications of this *nafs*. The academic community was encouraged to undertake efforts to combat the effect of this type of *nafs*. While contemplating the *nafs*, students were instructed to counteract its power through regular worship, good deeds, and reading the Qur'ān. Another type of soul is *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* (self-critical or blaming soul). This *nafs* makes a person sin but then incriminates itself. It reproaches itself and feels terrible. It also feels guilty. The guilt increases to the extent that the person leaves those sins. The verse is: *And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit; (eschew evil)* (Qur'ān, 75:2).

Nurturing *al-Nafs al-Muṭma'innah*

Staff and students were encouraged to read the Qur'ān to improve their *taqwā* (Allah-consciousness) and maintain continual and regular contact with the Qur'ān - the only road to comprehensive purification. The following verses were chanted to remind the students of the need and importance of the purification of the soul with particular reference to the development of a righteous or reassured soul, which is referred to as a soul at peace:

To the righteous soul will be said: O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back thou to thy Lord — well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter thou, then, among My Devotees! Yea, enter thou, My Heaven! (Qur'ān, 89:27-30).

Everyone in the University, particularly students, was reminded that the ultimate goal is to enter Heaven as *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* (in complete rest and satisfaction) — the goal set in the *'Ibādah* camps. Hence, students were urged to nurture *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*, for Allah will call such a soul to come to Him with well-pleased and well-pleasing unto Him to enter Heaven with His other devotees. The possessor of this *nafs* will be satisfied. He will be happy. Moreover, this person with this *nafs* will be moulded and disciplined to become the happiest. This Qur'ānic call was often repeated among students and staff to awaken students to realise such a goal. Thanks to Shaikh al-Kulliyah, who inspired students to move forward with nurturing this righteous soul.

Al-Nafs al-Ammārah (Evil-commanding soul) is the lowest degree of the soul, whereas the *al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah* (Self-critical soul) is at a higher degree for it blames oneself because of the wrongdoings. *Al-Nafs al-Muṭma'innah* (Righteous or reassured soul) is at the highest degree.

Avoidance of *Ḥubb al-Dunyā*

Ḥubb al-Dunyā's (lust for worldly life) goals of creating lust and obsession for worldly pleasures were often discussed during the several sessions of *Ibādah* camps with a note on its negative implications in life. In order to serve humanity, students at an Islamic university should also focus on seeking the pleasure of Allah, not nurturing love and lust for worldly life and investing their efforts to do so. In fact, this *ḥubb al-Dunyā* concept also caused students to transgress by turning them into arrogant, haughty, pompous people unaware of their social and community engagement obligations. Priority should not be given to lust for *al-Dunyā* since it would make forgetting about life after death infinite and rewarding to those who perform righteous tasks.

Since the conception of *ḥubb al-Dunyā* was predominant in the minds of the Muslim youth as modernisation was an upward trajectory, the importance of *ḥubb al-Ākhirah* (love for life after death) was discussed among students as an instrument to strengthen, bolster, and reinforce and perpetuate the 'Islamization of the Self' to face it. Students were unintentionally admiring, supporting, and embracing the effects of modernisation and materialisation, which caused them to foster *ḥubb al-Dunyā*, making them more worldly, secular, liberal, occidental and anthropocentric instead of theocentric in their philosophy of life, thought and vision. This rapid secularisation was immensely influential to the extent that the processes were pervasive and ubiquitous. The University community was urged to cultivate *ḥubb al-Ākhirah* and *ḥubbullāh* (love for Allah) characteristics or work towards obtaining *marḍātillāh* (pleasure of Allah) rather than traits that propel them to nourish *ḥubb al-Dunyā*, a trait not appreciated in Islam.

In order to caution the University community, especially the students, of the nature of this world and its lures, illusions, deceptions, pitfalls, traps, distractions, temptations and enticements, the following verses from the Qur'ān were chanted.

Know ye (all) that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children; Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure (for devotees of Allah). And what is the life of this world but Goods and chattels of deception? (Qur'an, 57:20).

Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but in nearness to Allah is the best of the goals (to return to) (Qur'an, 3:14)

Students were presented with information and optimism superior and more valuable to women, children, riches, silver, gold and many other worldly possessions to reinvigorate and rekindle self-Islamisation. Instead of the above, the highest of the aims is for the virtuous to reside in Gardens close to their Lord with rivers running under them. There, they will have companions who are pure and holy and will enjoy Allah's (*Riḍwān min Allāh*) good pleasure. What is more crucial and vital than the Pleasure of Allah? - told students while debating the Islamisation of the individual self.

Inculcating the culture of "Say what you do" and Avoiding Dual Policy

Another Qur'ānic principle introduced was "*lima taqūlūna mā lā taf'alūn*" which is contained in *Sūrat al-ṣaff* verses 2 and 3: "*O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do*" (Qur'ān, 61:1-2). This verse draws attention to the fact that there should be complete concordance between a genuine Muslim's word and deed. A Muslim should implement this principle and whatever he says, and when he has no intention of doing it or has no power for it, he should not say it. It also emphasises that one of the most detestable, despicable, abhorrent, disgusting and diabolical phenomena (*kabura maqtan*) in the Sight of Allah is the contradiction between an individual's words and actions. Thus, the conflict between words and deeds signifies a hypocrite who pretends to perform righteously but does the opposite.

Yes, people live in a world full of enticements, temptations, and hypocrisy, which is unavoidable but can be administered and monitored. People are addicted to worldly luxuries and comforts, and in order to obtain them, they resort to deception and, more crucially, double standards. Because faith (*Imān*) is frail and shaky, people appear friendly when they are not. People utter statements and assertions that never become acts and remain disconnected from reality, which the Qur'ān condemns. Of course, youths are generally oblivious to what they are doing. This is why this rhyme was frequently used and delivered to encourage the University community to be sincere, honest, forthright and not vulnerable to unjust deeds by enforcing a double standard strategy or policy. 'Islamising the Self' also requires "*no to dual policy or say what you do.*" There shall be room for hypocrisy (*nifāq*). Students and academics were encouraged to carefully read this stanza, consider its significance, and apply it honestly on and off campus and in their lives.

Concept of *Tijārah* and *Anṣārullāh*

The Qur'ān is Allah's Revelation, and it contains not only holistic guidance in all walks of life but also educates its followers by offering numerous practical concepts through which the Qur'ān's followers can enrich themselves with a clear understanding leading to Islamise the self in order *to lead the way to lead the universe* in all aspects, of course for the sustainable development of humanity with particular reference to morality and spirituality. It refers to a *tijārah* that will save humans from a painful punishment, which includes forgiving sins, admitting them into Gardens under which rivers flow and housing in magnificent homes in the Gardens of eternity, which is the ultimate triumph. Another favour longing to everyone is help from Allah and an imminent victory. The climax of *tijārah* is to advance good news to the believers. An Islamised individual is required to say good things only. Hence, students and academics were reminded of this important message from the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān uses the phrase "*kūnū anṣārullāh*" which means "*Be Helpers of Allah.*" The verse is, "*O ye who believe! Be ye helpers of God: As said Jesus, the son of Mary, to the Disciples, "Who will be My helpers to (the work of) God?" Said the Disciples, "We are God's helpers!" Then a portion of the Children believed, and a portion disbelieved: But We gave power to those who believed against their enemies, and they became the ones that prevailed*" (Qur'ān, 61: 14). In the verse, a command is made to the believers to be the Helpers of Allah. The believers are to behave as *anṣārullāh*. It is in the way that when Jesus, the son of Mary, asked his disciples, "*Who will be my disciples, they replied, we are Allah's helpers.*" The University community was reminded of this verse to ponder the meaning of standing with Allah - the Creator and obeying His commands. In other words, Helping Allah means striving to establish Allah's norms and systems on earth holistically.

The phrase *anṣārullāh* refers to the one who accepts Allah's admonition and instruction is a *Mu'min*, the one who submits practically to His commands is a *Muslim* and devout Allah-worshipper, the one who adopts an Allah-conscious attitude is a *Muttaqī*, the one who competes with others for good works is a *Muḥsin*, and above all, the one who begins working for the transformation and reformation of the people by employing the same method of admonitions and instruction and since the phrase is *anṣārullāh* rather than *anṣāruddīn* (Maududi, *The Meaning of th Qur'ān*).

Concept of *al-Birr* and *al-Taqwā*

'Islamising the self' is a broad notion that, in the context of IIUM, includes not only acts of devotion but, as previously stated, enhancing one's characters and behaviours that include

developing and expanding virtuousness and Piety in the social dimensions. As a result, another crucial topic frequently mentioned in student panel discussions was the concept of *al-Birr* and *al-Taqwā*. Students were encouraged to cultivate righteousness and Piety, hallmarks of al-Din's perfection and benevolence. Indeed, Islam encourages its followers to engage in *al-Birr* (righteous or virtuous deeds) and acquire Piety, or Allah's consciousness. In this regard, a verse from the Qur'ān was cited: "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety but help ye, not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah for Allah is strict in punishment" (Qur'ān, 5: 2).

The verse requires that people aid one another in virtue and piety and refrain from vice and transgression by not assisting one another in sin and transgression. *Al-Birr* encompasses everything that Allah finds pleasing in both inside and outward activities. *Al-Taqwā* entails abstaining from anything Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) despise and disdain, both inside and external. Students were taught the importance of performing every good deed and eschewing everything considered wicked, vile and sinister. Not only should one avoid sin, but one should also avoid exceeding Allah's bounds in illegal, immoral and prohibited activities. Students were warned that those who did not follow the divine rules would face retribution since Allah is stern in punishing wrongdoers, sinners, and transgressors. Another verse that emphasises *al-Birr* is:

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces toward East or West, but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him for your kin for orphans for the needy for the wayfarer for those who ask and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer and practise regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing (Qur'an, 2: 177).

Mohd Kamal Hassan, the third Rector and the author of the concept paper of the University, frequently reminded students of *al-khusrān*, which signifies Man's Loss, especially in *'Ibādah* camps. His lectures and discourses inspired students to perform *ma'rūfāt* (righteous deeds) while regularly avoiding *munkarāt* (vicious deeds). A *sūrah* contains the notion of *al-khusrān*: "By (the token of) Time (through the ages), Verily Man is in loss, except such as have faith and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth and Patience and Constancy" (Qur'ān, 103: 1-3), was recited at the end of every programme as a form of reminder about the Loss. So, recitation of *Sūrat al-ʿAsr* became a culture that continues in the University that students and academics must perform righteously.

Getting Rid of *Amrāḍ al-Qalb*

One of the frequently repeated messages was about preventing spiritual heart diseases (*amrāḍ al-qalb*). It was instilled in students through *'Ibādah* camps and weekly *ḥalaqah* sessions. Abstinence from *amrāḍ al-qalb* was promoted in order to purify the heart and soul and correct all ill-mannered characteristics and attributes. In general, narcissism was to be eliminated. Some qualities and behaviours in youth continuously lead to nearly unwarranted or mad behaviour. Envy, pride, anger, insolence, backbiting, defaming, nicknaming, speaking ill of others, suspicion, ostentation, haughtiness, hypocrisy, ingratitude, egotism, boastfulness, selfishness, egomania, egocentricity, vainglory, self-importance, self-admiration, and self-advertisement were highlighted as spiritual heart diseases. While avoiding these diseases,

students and faculty were encouraged to cultivate compassion, humility, meekness, and modesty in all their human interactions, more importantly in the University community.

An Islamised person should regularly and firmly check oneself in order to avoid undesirable behavioural patterns and characteristics. As the proponent of instilling humility of the most extraordinary degree among university community members and distancing from spiritual heart diseases, Mohd. Kamal Hassan frequently urged students to focus on other passages and Prophetic Examples. The following verses of the Qur'ān were recited to admonish the students:

O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong. O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible), for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it... But fear Allāh: for Allāh is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. (Qur'ān, 49:11-12)

Mohd Kamal Hassan, in his chapter on “Spirituality and Sustainable Development Goals”, writes that “*amrāḍ al-qalb includes polytheism, unbelief, hypocrisy, insincerity, arrogance, pride, self-conceit, greed, miserliness, jealousy, rancour, envy, ostentation, and craving for popularity, status and public praise.*” (Moten, Abdul Rashid. (ed), *Spirituality and Sustainability*, 2020)

Achieving *al-Falāḥ*

In various instances, especially during ‘*Ibādah* camps and *Halaqah* sessions, the emphasis was on achieving *al-falāḥ* (success) as another facet of Islamizing oneself. Students and faculty were inspired to strive for *al-falāḥ* because the Creator will reward *al-muflīḥūn*. Humbleness in prayer, avoidance of vain conversation, dialogue and debate, activeness in charity giving, abstinence from immoral sex, faithful observance of trusts and covenants, and guarding prayers will enter Paradise. These were among the highlights and the most significant aspects of the Believers' success. During *ṣalāḥ*, students memorised and recited specific sections. They also discussed the meaning of *al-falāḥ* in internal conversations and forums, which *murabbis* among the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge scholars witnessed. To remind individuals of the concept of *al-falāḥ*, the following phrases were frequently recited:

The Believers must (eventually) win through, those who humble themselves in their prayers, who avoid vain talk, who are active in deeds of charity, who abstain from sex, except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hand possess, for (in their case) they are free from blame, but those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors; those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants; and who (strictly) guard their prayers; those will be the heirs, who will inherit Paradise: they will dwell therein (forever) (Qur'ān, 23:1-12)

Upholding the *Amānah*

Understanding and using the concept of *amānah* (trust) as an institutional priority that promoted integrity as a fully comprehensive Islamic trait highlighted was a priority. From the

University's inception, the term *amānah* has been used, and its meaning has been extensively discussed in several forums to remind the academics and educate the students of its need for the application.

Indeed, students were urged to internalise the meaning of the concept of *amānah* and apply it in their workplace. It is also part of the *Sejahtera* Academic Framework (SAF). Applying *amānah* was critical to the IIUM work ethics because it caused students to recognise Allāh's gift of our lives as a type of *amānah* or trust from Him, actively defend and make the best use of it.

Faculty members were also reminded that the job entrusted to them is an extension of this trust, which motivated their devotion to teaching, supervision, research, and publications as vocational duties that are part of this sacred trust — even attending official meetings and all university activities. Similarly, students were invested with *amānah* and assigned the sacred learning duty. As forms of worship, all of these actions fulfilled *'ibādah*.

The Qur'ān was employed as a guide because it alone had the power to unite people worldwide. The University community was reminded that we had previously accepted the concept of *amānah* as life and obligation and that humans should not shirk this precious and sacred trust: "*We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains: but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it, he was indeed unjust and foolish*" (Qur'ān, 33:72). Humanity undertook the burden and should fulfil the responsibility it has.

Institutionalising the Culture of *Shūrā*

The culture of mutual consultation (*shūrā*) is essential for the smooth running of the administration. Good governance is possible only when this concept is applied under all circumstances. As a role model, the Prophet (pbuh) applied *shūrā*, as evident from the *Ḥadīth* literature. Islamic history provides evidence that the application of *shūrā* by leaders or rulers made them successful and acceptable to the subjects. At the same time, disregard for *shūrā* resulted in disastrous failure. The Qur'ān refers to this concept in two verses.

Hence, as a part of the Islamisation process of the self, the university was eager to apply this Qur'ānic concept. Students were told the significance of *shūrā* in the decision-making process. This concept also would pave the way for respecting colleagues' diverse views and opinions, including those of junior members. The institutionalisation of *shūrā* in the administration would never encourage bigotry. *Shūrā* was regarded as close to democratisation, paving the way for patiently listening to everyone's views and not preventing anyone from speaking or expressing his/her grievances. This healthy concept would result in a cordial atmosphere in any governance. Students were urged to implement the system of *shūrā*, actively engaging colleagues in consultation. The Qur'ān refers to this concept in two verses. However, the following verse was often quoted to remind students of the significance of mutual consultation: Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer: who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of What We bestow on them for sustenance (Qur'ān, 42:38)

A leader should be a father figure to many people, especially co-workers, fellow employees and colleagues. Indeed, the application of *shūrā* would never disappoint anyone in his leadership. Instead, it would put him at ease and peace because its implementation would make him feel better and comfort him, for the people would accept his decisions without reservation and

challenge. There is no place or evidence for discrimination between professionals and individuals in any administration or decision-making if *shūrā* is applied. During the 1980s, chauvinist attitudes, arrogance, and highhandedness were unheard of because divergent views were adequately considered and opposing viewpoints were given due consideration.

Moreover, the same thing was taught to students so they would become fair leaders who would be Allah-fearing and Allah-accountable and keep in mind the concept of compassion (*Raḥmah*) and the well-being of the subjects. They were educated to observe *shūrā* in their decision-making. This process would allow fellow workers or students to express their views without fear. If some opinions were not accepted, proper reasons could be provided. Eventually, this would lead to *ḥusn al-ẓann*. Such a phenomenon would beget good governance.

The Concept of *Ibtilā'* and *Miḥnah*

Ibtilā' and *miḥnah* (trials and tribulations) are unavoidable in people's lives. No one can escape from it. Difficulties, sorrows, loss of riches, loss of souls, and pains are all part of the journey, and humanity must stay patient, continue, remember Allah, repent unto Him and align their path with Allah's will. According to the Qur'ān, prophets and messengers had faced numerous tragedies, calamities, catastrophes and sufferings; they had to endure and persevere; they were patient because they knew there would be a reward for patience and endurance, particularly in times of adversity and discomfort. According to Islam, those who lack patience and tolerance are the losers since Allah is with those who are patient: "... *And be patient and persevering: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere*" (Qur'ān, 8:46).

Yes, the Qur'ān declares that Allah will put every human to the test. Furthermore, patience is one of Allah's characteristics, displaying His benevolence towards His creation. Allah also rewards patient people. Students and faculty were continually reminded of this *ibtilā'* in order for them to be conscious of it, face it with patience and steadfastness, cleanse their souls of sins and Islamise themselves to face all such unprecedented challenges. They were encouraged to be steady, fortified, patient, and grateful to Allah, the Sustainer of the Universe. Most often quoted verses are: "*Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who say when afflicted with calamity, 'to Allah we belong to and to Him we return'*" (Qur'ān, 2: 155-156). Two additional verses were regularly chanted to remind students of Allah's test of who is the best among others: "*Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion: and He over all things hath Power; He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving*" (Qur'ān, 67:1-2)

Applying the Method of *Wasatīyyah*

The *ummah's* dignity was envisioned as imbued with peace and governed by competent professionals and egalitarian intellectuals whose objectivity, integrity, trustworthiness, and Allāh-consciousness were beyond reproach. The University community was urged to apply *wasatīyyah* (Islamic moderation) as an indispensable component of discourse and every human exchange. Such an approach pre-empts the devastating consequences of extremism, radicalism, and religious obscurantism. Students could not thrive and divert the *ummah* from its role as *khalīfah*. Expressing profound concerns for the nominal Muslim way of life, *ifrāt* and *tafrīt* must be avoided at all costs. Everyone was cautioned against harm caused by excessiveness and slackness. Students and staff were not only expected to ensure moderation in all things but also

to educate the *ummah* about the benefits of the middle path that assures just decisions when sincerely following Qur'ānic injunctions.

Students and staff were reminded that Islamic moderation alone would bring peace, prosperity, and happiness. In justification, the following verse was quoted:

Thus, have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves; and We appointed the Qiblah to which you were used, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (from the faith). Indeed, it was (a change) momentous, except to those guided by Allāh. And never would Allāh make your faith of no effect. For Allāh is to all people most surely full of kindness, Most Merciful. (Qur'an, 2:143)

Applying a justly balanced approach to all matters was essential because the Messenger of Allah is a witness to us.

Using Arabic Terms

Students were inspired to use Qur'ānic phrases and concepts in discourses as one of the strategies of Islamisation/Islamicisation because the original language of the Qur'an conveyed undistorted meanings, enriching and strengthening clear comprehension. Appropriate Arabic terms and phrases were employed throughout presentations to express the valid message of the Qur'an, which aided in comprehending the context and derivation, reminding students and the audience of Islam's reality. The importance of using the Arabic terms was highly emphasised. Indeed, students could use them frequently, comprehend the true meaning and apply them in their daily lives. The emphasis was on using Arabic terms in Islamic religious presentations to comprehend the true meaning, even when English translations were utilised.

The most commonly used terms were: *al-īmān* (faith), *al-tawhīd* (Oneness of Allah), *al-iḥsān* (excellence, doing good, benevolence), *al-dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), *al-bid'ah* (innovation in religion), *al-khurāfah* (superstition), *al-kufr* (unbelief), *al-shirk* (polytheism), *al-nifāq* (hypocrisy), *al-irtidād* (apostasy), *al-taqwā* (Allāh-consciousness), *al-falāḥ* (success), *al-istiqāmah* (steadfastness), *al-amānah* (trust, integrity), *al-ikhhlāṣ* (sincerity), *al-īmān wa al-ʿamal al-ṣāliḥ* (faith and good deeds), *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (propagating righteousness and forbidding viciousness), *al-khusrān* (Loss), *al-iṣlāḥ* (reform), *al-tajdīd* (renewal), *al-takāmul* (integration) and others.

Keeping students in constant contact with the Islamic Revelation is another noteworthy example of using Arabic terms in the University. An Arabic word called *Kulliyyah* has been employed to name each "Faculty". The term "Faculty" is used in universities worldwide, but the IIUM has instead used the term *Kulliyyah*. The University also implied a hostel using *Maḥalla* in Arabic. According to the University, using Arabic terms would accurately reflect the intended meaning and understanding, while using their English equivalents could fail to do so. All signage is bilingual in English and Arabic, supporting the University's goal, as is evident.

Course on Philosophy of Islamic Ethics

A required course on the Philosophy of Islamic Ethics, also known as the Ethical Philosophy of Islam, was offered to ensure students' Islamisation of the self or spiritualisation and

ethicalisation as one of the initiatives for Islamising the self with particular reference to improving moral excellence. This course strengthened students' consciousness and religiosity, intending to mould them morally and spiritually to become perfect or complete human beings. Despite the fact that the course included several Qur'ānic verses and the *ahādīth* of the Prophet (pbuh), the ethical discourse was dominated by al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* as it was one of the relevant texts to Islamise the self, besides reviving the sciences of religion (*Dīn*). Students eagerly enrolled in this course as they enjoyed the articulation of the instructor-*murabbī*. This course functioned as a key to transforming students into good humans (*Insan Sejahtera*) with a superlative degree of ethical standards manifesting in their interaction with others and society.

Creating Awareness about Deviant Teachings

The fundamental elements of Islam must be well understood and explained to uphold, sustain and protect the correct *'aqīdah*. Indeed, distancing from all sorts of aberrant teachings that aim to weaken an individual's creed and doctrines was a critical process of Islamising the self, especially while studying the inappropriate interpretation. Erroneous doctrines influenced Malaysians, and students were wary. Thus, educating students on the difference between authentic Islamic and deviant teachings was critical to maintaining *'aqīdah*; otherwise, abnormal forces could affect them. This is one example.

Another obstacle was the dominance of twisted or distorted Sufism. It was concerned about students drawn to specific *Sūfī* organisations who misunderstood Sufism, and it wanted to clear the air for individuals who believed in improper approaches to *dhikr*. While appreciating and acknowledging authentic Sufism, critiques of deviant Sufi teachings and practises were heard. For example, creedal and ideological distinctions between *Sunnīs* and *Shiās* were underlined and discussed concerning popular deviant beliefs. Students were warned about the hazards of such misguided teachings, notably the proliferation of specific erroneous religious ideas in Malaysia. The University students were advised to be wary and mindful of heretical ideas that could weaken, undermine and erode their *'aqīdah*.

Avoiding the Phenomenon of *sū'al-ẓann*

The development of *ḥusn al-ẓann*, which refers to positive and constructive thinking or having confidence in oneself or action, is also considered 'Islamising the Self.' The *sū'al-ẓann*, refers to negative and sceptical thinking and mind. This *sū'al-ẓann* has devastating consequences. It is also the source of dissension and peaceless behaviour, which none favours. Thus, this *sū'al-ẓann* was not only disliked but should be eradicated at any cost. This is why the students were urged not to think negatively about anyone or speculate upon seeing something on the surface from a distance. Instead, students were advised to verify and cross-check should there arise doubt. No conclusion should be reached based on an assumption, conjecture or speculation. So, *ḥusn al-ẓann* was the order of the day, and the talks by scholars frequently referred to the need for it. An Islamised individual will apply this spectacular concept.

Fostering Unity and Ummatism

Islam is based on a firm belief in Allah's oneness, transcendence, and universality. Allah, according to Muslims, is one, eternal, and universal. He created all humans, provides for all humans, judges all humans, and is the Lord of all humans.

Doubtless, the *ummah's* dilemma was/is on the surge due to disunity, egoism, parochialism, ethnocentrism, and misunderstood nationalism. The absence of Muslim solidarity disturbed academics. Hence, students were reminded to contemplate this sad state, as many Muslim leaders were influenced by Western hegemony mostly because they could not maintain their Muslim identity. Concerned over the submissive mentality of Muslim leaders to Western political masters, examples were cited from the Prophet (pbuh) with contemporary relevance that, if properly applied, would obtain good governance.

Instead of unthinkably and mindlessly following past or present principles, methods, and systems, contemporary germaneness of contributions from past Muslim leaders has been promoted. New approaches and solutions were proposed in light of integrated knowledge within the Qur'ān and Sunnah worldview. Muslim decline was seen as a consequence of the *ummah* having distanced themselves from Revealed Guidance, and it was crucial to understand this framework in the proper context for rescue. The Qur'ānic verse related to *ummaticism* is: "*Mankind was one single nation, and God sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings and with them He sent the Book in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed...*" (Qur'ān, 2: 213).

The lack of unity, known as *ummaticism*, was the most significant crisis. Students' attention was drawn to the vital importance of Muslim unity, for which the following verse was primarily quoted:

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allāh (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember with gratitude Allāh's favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace, you became brethren; and you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, doth Allāh make His signs clear to you: that you may be guided. (Qur'ān, 3:103)

Therefore, the need to uphold and hold onto the *ḥablullāh* (the rope of Allāh SWT) was stressed to retain and ensure the missing accord. This equates with *ummaticism* rather than division caused by artificial barriers – be they theological, political, intellectual, or social. Unfortunately, Muslims have strayed far from the benefits availed by the *ḥablullāh*. The students were reminded of this state to promote unity and *ummatic* consciousness. An Islamised individual should be *ummah*-conscious, *ummah*-friendly, and *ummah*-centred, not influenced by parochialism and chauvinism. The priority of leaders must be unification and de-dichotomisation.

Congregational Prayer

Every Muslim graduate and professional is to aspire for righteousness and Allāh-consciousness. The University community is meant to embrace the highest orders of spirituality. To accomplish this, students and staff were required to pray in *jamā'ah* (congregation) on campus. So, everyone was urged to frequent the *masjid* for *ṣalāh* in the congregation. A Muslim fulfils such fundamental and essential obligations. Thus, all students were inspired to perform *'ibādāt* (acts of worship) in accordance with Islamic rules and requirements, propelling them towards perfection as *khalifahs* and guides of the *ummah*. This verse was recited to remind students and faculty of the importance of regular, consistent, daily prayer: "*Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers, especially the middle prayer and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind)*" (Qur'ān,

2:238). The University built a Mosque in the centre of campus to facilitate congregational prayers.

CONCLUSION

This article has discussed 'Islamising the Self' among the University's students and staff from 1983 to 1990, focusing on the spiritual, intellectual, moral, ethical, and holistic personality development required for competent leadership. It highlighted the University's non-formal educational efforts that stressed the need for personal excellence. First, *halaqah* sessions with specialised curricula that improved students' oratory, argumentation, debating, critical thinking and leadership skills are highlighted. Second, the *'ibadah* camps touted specific themes such as the concept of *'ibadah*, Brotherhood, Islamic personality, social development, *Da'wah* as a fundamental obligation, Islamic civilisation as the saviour of humanity, social realities, Islamic ideals, and *istiqamah* were instrumental to 'Islamising the Self' been registered. Then, it referred to discussions that students as *'ibad al-Rahmān*, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, *khalīfatullāh fī al-arḍ* and *ulū al-albāb*, which are the most crucial concepts found in the Qur'ān.

As critical elements of 'Islamising the Self', vital themes included *tazkiyat al-nafs*, *al-nafs al-ammārah*, *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*, the culture of "say what you do" and avoiding dual policy, the concept of *tijārah* and *anṣārullāh*, concept of *al-birr* and *al-taqwā*, ridding of *amrāḍ al-qalb*, *al-falāḥ*, *amānah*, *shūrā*, the concept of *ibtilā'* and *miḥnah*, the method of *wasāṭiyyah*, utilising Arabic terms, a course on Philosophy of Islamic Ethics, deviant teachings, the phenomenon of *sū'al-ḡann*, unity and ummatism, and congregational prayer.

Doubtless, the concepts and themes mentioned above are essential for maintaining religiosity with *ummah* and humankind consciousness as demanded by the Creator, the Lord of the Universe. These themes are vibrant to foster morality, ethics, spirituality and Islamic leadership qualities combined with universal humanitarian values required for today's world, which help eliminate corruption, hypocrisy, a lack of accountability, extremism in all forms, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, narcissism, nepotism, egotism, injustice, and peacelessness. The University has produced graduates who transcend discrimination, division, dissension, dichotomisation and bigotry based on chauvinism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, parochialism, racism, and unilateralism by cultivating critical qualities for sustainable holistic development.

The author recommends paying extraordinary attention and respect to the pioneers' efforts by maintaining and acknowledging all of the abovementioned vital programmes, disseminating the core concepts and articulating the themes in some form or another, enabling students to graduate with essential attributes shaping them to be virtuous and Allah-fearing humans with a global vision, indiscriminate characteristics, passionate and fervent belief to enforce Allah's commands avoiding all forms of unlawful, illegal, and unethical norms and upholding justice, being competent and trustworthy leaders granted with good governance skills and serving the *ummah* and humanity in the spirit of *Raḥmatan Li'l 'Ālamīn* as indicated in the University's *Sejahtera* Academic Framework.

Suppose all the essential programmes and other crucial concepts are implemented unreservedly. In that case, the students, upon graduation, will undoubtedly nurture positive, optimistic and constructive thinking skills to serve humanity indiscriminately as one of the compassionate phenomena and keep them away from all sorts of extremist tendencies and

interpretations, whether historical, doctrinal, political or cultural. They will also fight against the rise of radicalisation and terrorism, which are the issues that lead to disastrous instances in religion, politics, and society. The University hoped to breed decent, honest and noble individuals with extensive and admirable knowledge of all sciences, religion and wisdom to serve all people in all regions without racial, religious, or political bias by cultivating those virtues and morals mentioned in the preceding pages; hence, the University pay attention to these programmes and inculcation of those values and concepts so that there is historical continuity in achieving the goals of the University to produce good humans who will uphold all universal values to make humanity to live in peace with prosperity and success.

In this context, we also acknowledge that the International Islamic University Malaysia has implemented nearly every aspect, if not all, of the 'Malaysia Madani' concept. It was done through numerous non-formal programmes, demonstrated and evidenced by the subjects and areas addressed, and while it did not directly employ words from the concept, its spirit and objectives had been articulated through decades. As 'Malaysia Madani' (Anwar Ibrahim, 2022) indicates, the University can help ensure sustainability, care and compassion, respect, innovation, prosperity and trust, known as SCRIPT (in English) in students, who will eventually disseminate this concept in society with the utmost sincerity to achieve its lofty objectives.

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