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From the Editor's Desk: Islamic Epistemology, Ontology, Axiology, and Teleology (I-EOAT)

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The discourse of Islamisation of Human Knowledge (IoHK) needs to be revived from time to time. Generally, this is the obligation bestowed upon every Muslim. Particularly it is the responsibility of those in academia, and since it is the University's unique philosophy, we must ensure its continuation. The main purposes are to break free from the colonization of knowledge by the Western-secularized capitalist-driven framework and create our own framework that is in line with Islamic belief and precept. Since it is a continuous project, as we proceed, we must be dynamic without neglecting its fundamentals or guidelines.

As an academic who works in IIUM, sometimes I came across others who complained that they could not understand the steps in doing IoHK. One of the typical reasons given was that the steps outlined by IoHK founding fathers were too "complicated" and "complex."

Hence, I humbly would like to offer perhaps a simpler guideline to doing it - without neglecting the importance for us to study the founding fathers' works - which I believe can be done by everyone. In fact, realized it or not, as Muslim academics, such a guideline has been followed by many of us for years. It is called as a guideline because if we ensure that all the elements in the guideline are in line with Islamic teachings, then we can, to a certain extent, say that we have done IoHK.

The guideline is called EOAT, the acronym for epistemology, ontology, axiology and teleology. The first time I heard about this acronym was from the Dean of AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), Prof. Dr. Shukran Abd Rahman. When I heard about it and reflected upon it, I realized that this was what I had been doing. In research, I had been searching

for a term that can explain the guideline that I used. It was the guideline that guided the whole research, from the theoretical framework to the research findings and suggestions. The guideline was of course had to be Islamic since as a Muslim, I must not do anything outside the Islamic teachings.

It was EOAT that encapsulated my works, imbued with Islamic faith and teachings. Hence, it was an Islamic EOAT or I-EOAT, which guided the whole discourse.

Basically, epistemology is about how we arrived at the knowledge that we have. As Muslim researchers, we based our knowledge on the revelation, which are the Qur'an and Sunnah. Our knowledge vis-à-vis the way we think and reasoning, must be in lined with Islamic teachings.

Then ontology is about the definition given to a being or a

concept. For example a leader, a state, or a constitution. When defining anything, Muslim researchers supposedly will automatically put aside any properties or features that are not in line with Islamic precepts.

Next, axiology is about what we value when we do our analysis. Of course, as Muslim researchers, we will value correctly i.e. those elements that are considered as good and promoted in Islam will be the ones that we appreciate in our research.

Lastly, teleology is about the objective of anything, including research. As mentioned by Aristotle when he conceptualized telos, everything has its objective or purpose in this world. Therefore, as Muslim researchers, we must ensure that our research objectives are within the Islamic guidelines and serve the Ummah.

Hence, if we ensure that we are following this Islamic EOAT, every devoted Muslim researcher can do IoHK. Not only academics, but administrative staff can also do it too. However, the question of whether this is a “low level” or a “high level” stage of doing IoHK is another matter. Nonetheless, the most important point is that Muslim researchers can always do it if we are sincere and steadfast in the Islamic faith. This is despite the challenges that we may face from other secular schools of thought or “conventional” academic practices that are dominant in academia and can be antagonistic toward our Islamic approach. This is also why I include the word “Islamic” in the EOAT, to differentiate it from other secular or religious perspectives, and thus will arrive at different findings and conclusions.

Therefore, we invite all the University's community to contribute to this CENTRIS e-bulletin by channeling your thoughts through article writing. Hopefully, the e-bulletin can be the platform for us to showcase our perspective on issues that happened throughout the world, thus countering the hegemonic non-Islamic paradigms surrounding us.

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The Foundation and Completion of Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Mosque CENTRIS in Gombak (Part I)



Dr. Raudlotul Firdaus Former Deputy Director of
AHAS KIRKHS SHAS Mosque 2016-2022

Introduction

To guarantee its success, every institution needs its internal workforce. To address this, Centre for Islamisation (CENTRIS), wherein the Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah (SHAS) Mosque is a part of, was established as the management and advocacy group. Its goals are to offer beneficial programs and more balanced lessons that are in line with the lifestyles of *Sejahtera* Islam to both public and IIUM circles.

Typically, the heart of IIUM is the SHAS Mosque as stated in the Prophet Muhammad SAW's hadith. CENTRIS' approach to Muslim growth involves offering and encouraging the IIUM community to perform congregational required prayers at the centre of the campus to achieve numerous degrees from Allah:

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ صَلَاةُ
الْجَمَاعَةِ تَفْضُلُ مِنْ صَلَاةِ الْفَذِّ بِسَبْعٍ وَعِشْرِينَ دَرَجَةً

Ibn 'Umar reported God's Messenger as saying, "Prayer (salāh) performed in a congregation is twenty-seven degrees more excellent than prayer said by a single person" (Bukhari and Muslim).

It is important to note that the Quran and Hadith, the two main sources for leading a true Islamic life, provide the knowledge of *fardu 'ayn* that every Muslim is required to acquire. This is among the most important agendas of knowledge dissemination in SHAS Mosque. The mosque also provides the fundamental guidelines for disseminating such information. Furthermore, via different programmes and modules, it is ready to help with the formation and education of a Muslim personality for the IIUM Community and the public so that they can become authentic Muslims.

Vision and Mission

Based on the customer satisfaction surveys about the spiritual and religious events that the mosque organized over the years, SHAS Mosque's vision and goal are brief, yet profoundly significant. Among them:

“ The vision of SHAS Mosque

To become a Centre for Spiritual Enhancement (*Tarbiyah Rūhiyyah*) in line with the IIUM's vision and mission. ”

“ The mission of SHAS Mosque

To carry out Spiritual Enhancement (*Tarbiyah Rūhiyyah*) programmes and services for spiritual enlightenment of IIUM Community as well as mosque management in order to achieve IIUM's Vision and Mission. ”

Furthermore, the corporate goals and client charter of SHAS Mosque are directed not only at the IIUM community but also towards the ummah in Malaysia and the whole Muslim world. As the IIUM Centre for Spiritual Enhancement (*Tarbiyah Rūhiyyah*) and as the centre for ibadah, the components of offering religious programmes, quality and community services, and as a place of reference have been emphasized in the corporate objectives.



The Official Social Media Platform for SHAS Mosque

Similarly, the IIUM's vision and mission have been reflected in the formulation of SHAS Mosque's client charter. To fulfill its goal and objective, it will adhere to seven principles. These include the following: (1) serving as a centre for spiritual development (*Tarbiyah Rūhiyyah*) (2) support the teaching and learning of the Qur'an and Sunnah; (3) guarantee the punctual performance of the five congregational prayers each day; (4) offer excellent facilities and

efficient services; (5) uphold integrity in financial management and administration; (6) encourage Islamic intellectualism and Ummatic consciousness; and (7) reinforce Islamic brotherhood and family life.

SHAS Mosque is situated in the heart of the Gombak campus. The reason is, among others, to draw in nearby faculty and students. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, the former rector of IIUM, used to emphasize that "children staying in their Mahallahs on top of the mountain will see people praying and will rush to join the congregational prayers."

However, in 2020, regular events like congregational prayers and daily lectures were halted. This was when the Malaysian government announced a series of lockdowns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision was made following the notice circulated by the Selangor's religious authority, Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Selangor (MAIS), with which SHAS Mosque Gombak is officially affiliated. Nevertheless, a lot of online forums and events were organized to fulfill the minimal standards outlined in the vision and purpose statements of the SHAS mosque. To prevent the spread of illness, the

government progressively removed the restrictions and started its operations again while following the designated Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The successful organization of at least one hundred programmes has been accomplished by the management team over the five years, including those conducted online during the lockdown. These were done to ensure the maintenance of the community's religiosity and spiritual sustainability. Furthermore, online programmes played a vital role in sustaining lifelong learning for each person as they confronted the challenges and tests posed by the pandemic.



The construction of Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Mosque in 1995

Construction and Establishment

After being officiated on October 9, 2000, the Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah (SHAS) Mosque was named after Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah Ibni Al-Marhum Al-Sultan Abu Bakar Ri'ayatuddin Al-Muazam Shah, the Sultan of Pahang Darul Makmur and the University's constitutional head. The mosque is located at the International Islamic University of Malaysia's Gombak Campus. Masjid al-Haram served as the basis and inspiration for the mosque's placement, which is at the centre of the main campus.

The construction of SHAS Mosque was completed on October 12, 1997, after the process began in February 1995. Hajeedar and Associates Sdn. Bhd., a well-known architecture company in Malaysia, was responsible for the planning of its design. Additionally, this architectural company also designed the Tabung Haji Tower, which is located between Jalan Ampang and Jalan Ismail. Meanwhile, Sunissa Sdn. Bhd. managed the construction of the building. Due to the enormous workload,

the mosque's total construction cost was estimated to be around RM 19.4 million. It took nearly three years to finish. As of 2024, the mosque celebrated its 27th anniversary of establishment.

Conceptually, the mosque's general planning and design aim to promote and integrate comprehensive knowledge in the spirit of *tawhīd* and *'ibādah*. This is to integrate revealed knowledge and human sciences within the theoretical and practical framework of Islamic principles. As mentioned, the SHAS Mosque, being centrally located in the main campus and in keeping up with its motto the 'Garden of Knowledge and Virtue,' connects and interconnects all the campus' Kulliyahs, Centres, Departments, Institutes, Mahallahs and other offices. This also establishes and reinforces such values to the IIUM community i.e. the brotherhood and sisterhood in Islam (*ukhuwwah Islāmiyyah*),

The mosque's principal hallmark design was achieved using a towering 39-meter pencil-shaped minaret and a big, wide 17-meter dome in its space-age architecture. The distinctive pencil shape design was influenced by Sinan Turkish's design, which is distinct from other conventional mosques. Up to 9000 *jama'ah* can be accommodated in the massive primary prayer hall. The idea of internal Islamic art served as inspiration for the mosque's interior design. Islamic calligraphy, floral, geometric, and Moroccan-inspired visual art adorn its dome. The magnificent chandelier donated by His Royal Highness Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Al Haj has added to the mosque's splendour, while the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia added the imported carpet. The same pattern of design can be found in the Masjid al-Haram. IIUM's dedication to fortifying

bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia and the Selangor Royal Family was demonstrated by these donations. Its recognition as one of Malaysia's most exquisite mosques is not surprising.

Thus, the IIUM Mosque serves as the locus or spiritual heart of the IIUM community which includes officers, academics, students, administrative and support staff.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

From the time of its founding until 2018, SHAS Mosque—then known as the Office of Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Mosque IIUM—operated independently. Then it merged with CENTRIS, as part of the top management reorganization of the centre. As a result, today SHAS Mosque is under the CENTRIS purview.

Since the two offices combined, CENTRIS has been run by a committed team of SHAS Mosque's officers, with assistance from other members nominated each term. Professor Dr. Akmal Khuzairy Abd. Rahman led CENTRIS during the 2021–2022 academic year, while Assistant Professor Dr. Raudlotul Firdaus Fatah Yasin was in charge as Deputy Director. Ustadh Shahrul Hisham Idzahar (top Imam) and Ustadh Edros Mustakin (top Bilal) of the mosque were aided by Ustadh Muhammad Ramadhan Subky. Since the team's founding, Ustadh Farid, Dato' Hamidon Abd Hamid, Dr. Habeeb Rahman Ibramsa, Dr. Majdan Ilias, and Assoc Prof. Dr. Abdul Salam Muhammad served as its five directors.

This organization is backed by a varied set of people with a range of professional specialties. Previously, these people included the Head of the Imam Unit, Assoc Prof. Dr. Radwan Jamal al-Atrash, and the former head, Ustadh Abdul Khair Jalil. Other key staff were Dr. Mohamed Rashid Ab Razak, the head of the Training and Iqra' Unit, and Dr. Mohd Puzhi Usop, the former head.

Currently, with Dr. Mohamed Rashid Ab Razak serving as his Deputy, Dato' Hamidon was reappointed as the Director of CENTRIS in 2023 and has remained in that role to this day. The positions of Head of Training and Iqra' Unit are filled by Ustadh Hafiz Anuar Abdullah while the Head of Imam and Da'wah Unit is filled by Ustadh Mohd Shukri Abdullah.

To be continued *in shā Allāh*.



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