

Abdel Aziz Berghout is Professor of Islamic Studies and Civilisation, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge, and Human Sciences (AHAS-KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). He obtained a Ph.D. in Islamic Civilisation and History - Doctor of Philosophy, University Malaysia (UM), a Ph.D. in Education, Kulliyah of Education, and a Master in Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Heritage, International Islamic University Malaysia, and his bachelor's degree in finance from the National Institute of Finance, Algeria. He was former Deputy Rector and Dean (OSTAC), IIUM.

Khalid Ahmad obtained his master and doctorate degrees from AMU, Aligarh, India in 1988. He was attached to IIUM since 1993 as Deputy Dean, Research Management Centre, Director of Graduate School of Management, Faculty (Kulliyah) of Economics and Management Sciences, Dean, Office of the Corporate Strategy and has served as Dean of International Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance (IIIBF) before joining College of Business and Economics (CBE), Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. He also served as Research Professor at Putra Business School, Universiti Putra Malaysia and is currently a Professor at ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia.



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SDG 18 Spirituality, Values and Culture
for Humanising Sustainable Development
A Future Worldview
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SDG 18 Spirituality, Values and Culture

for Humanising Sustainable Development: A Future Worldview

Our experiences and ideas have led us to believe that spirituality is just one more dimension that we must be aware of when dealing with issues of sustainable development goals (SDGs). We recognise it and can make it work for ourselves as 'Islamic' or 'Islamic' as well as for the rest of humankind. It is therefore timely to examine spirituality in relation to its global applicability. This publication on SDG 18 is the first of its kind not only in our university but also in many other parts of the world. It is meant as a vehicle to advance the cause of spirituality, values, and culture in humanising sustainable development. More significantly, though, is to show that although this dimension is intangible, it is currently gaining relevance in global discourse, which is what our analysis of this edited book will focus on. This book highlights how urgent it is to come up with a new SDG namely SDG 18, that addresses the role of spirituality, values, and culture in not only humanising sustainable development but also maintaining the harmony needed to support both ecological and human civilisation in a complex and globalised world.

As the world moves towards more and more complexity and dynamics, it is only prudent to rethink our concept of what sustainable development entails. As a result, it is critical that the taxonomy, structure, and function of development be critically examined in order to improve articulation and orientation. Any viable development viewpoint must contain a thorough and integrated understanding of who the human being is. The human being is defined not only by his body, mind, intellect, brain, and senses, but also by the forces of his soul and heart, values and character, culture, and social acts. Therefore, the human being is a synthesis of these physical, psychological, mental, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, moral, social, cultural, and civilisational forces, all of which must coexist in harmony and balance. Sustainable development must target holistically the entire human person as the driving force of growth and civilisation if it is to reclaim balance and efficacy.

Among other things, SDG 18 addresses the issue of balance and harmony in the formula for sustainable development. If one desires to see future-balanced growth, spirituality, values, and culture must be repositioned and institutionalised as part of the mainstream sustainable development narrative and worldview, as well as policies, strategies, and action plans.

The SDG 18 creates an exceptional chance to revisit the 17 SDGs and ensure that spirituality, values, and culture become inherent and influential in guiding people and policies towards balance and harmony in a conscious way. SDG 18 has a significant impact on overall sustainable development activities by promoting ethical leadership, values-driven governance and management, social-oriented activities, indigenous wisdom and culture, and civilisational-cultural engagement as well as exchange for the benefit of humanity and planet wellbeing.

The SDG18 framework and narrative aim to influence not only the tangible aspects of sustainable development, but also the intangible, in which the word, heart, mindset, attitude, behaviors, and cultural understanding become central to SDGs and progress. Education has a significant role to play in nurturing the holistic and harmonious human being (*Insan Sejahtera*) and sustaining a balanced society and civilisation in this era and beyond. As a result, education must be transformed as the driving force for the betterment of human life and civilisation.

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Tel: 03-6421 1211-1200

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SDG 18 Spirituality, Values and Culture
for Humanising Sustainable Development: A Future Worldview

2nd Edition

Abdel Aziz Berghout | Khalid Ahmad
Edited by



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A Future Worldview

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The SDG18 can be an impetus for a new rejuvenated model of sustainable development capable of re-setting the SDGs agenda from power and material centered to values and ethics driven. Only in this way we can chart the new way forward where the human being regains his humanity, the civilisation recognises its balance and planet liberated from the corruption of wronged people.

The way forward today is to work seriously and collectively to achieve the right thrusts advocated by SDG18 namely:

- 1) Strengthen humanitarian economy and politics,
- 2) Strengthen ethical leadership, governance, and management,
- 3) Strengthen values-driven society,
- 4) Nurture Balanced human being (wagepanit),
- 5) Enhance Ethical Ecology and valorised nature,
- 6) Build Balanced civilisation and culture,
- 7) Advocate integrated knowledge and values-driven education,
- 8) Responsible and values-driven science, technology, and innovation

Hence, before we can do that, we must regain our human conscience and wisdom so that we do not deepen our global ecological and ethical crisis to the point of no return, where humans will cease developing sustainably and enter the phase of global self-destruction due to selfishness, greed, and corruption of the soul, heart, mind, and human nature.



SDG 18
Spirituality
Values and Culture
for Humanising Sustainable Development
A Future Worldview

Edited by
Abdelaziz Berghout | Khaliq Ahmad
2nd edition



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Abbreviations

4IR	- Fourth Industrial Revolution
5Ps	- People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership
AEI	- Asia-Europe Institute
CE	- Circular Economy
CI	- Cultural Intelligence
EDR	- Estimated Decomposition Rates
ESCAP	- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESG	- Environment, Social and Governance
EU	- European Union
FPK	- Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan (National Philosophy of Education)
FWAAS	- Fellow World Academy of Art and Science
FWAIM	- Fellow World Academy of Islamic Management
GCC	- Gulf Cooperation Council
GIES	- Global Islamic Economy Summit
GNP	- Gross National Product
GNHI	- Gross National Happiness Index
HEGP	- Higher Education Governance & Policy
III&CE	- Internationalisation, Integration, Islamisation & Comprehensive Excellence
IIUM	- International Islamic University Malaysia
ISTAC	- International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation
ISESCO	- Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
KPM	- Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (Ministry of Education, Malaysia)
LE	- Linear Economy
MDGs	- Millennium Development Goals
MoI	- Means of Implementation
OIC	- Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
OECD	- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QHM	- Quadruple Helix Model
SD	- Sustainable Development
SDGs	- Sustainable Development Goals

- SEL - Social and Emotional Learning
- SPICES - Spiritual, Physiological, Intellectual, Cognitive, Emotional & Societal
- THM - Triple Helix Model
- UKIFC - The Islamic Finance Council UK
- UN - United Nations
- UNCBD - United Nation Convention on Biological Diversity
- UNCCD - United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification
- UNCHD - United Nation Conference on Human Development
- UNDP - United Nations Development Plan
- UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- UNFCCC - United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change
- WSSD - World Summit on Sustainable Development
- WISER - Worldwide, Inclusive, Sustainable, Equitable, *Raḥmān lil `ālamīn*

Preface

Our experiences and ideas have led us to believe that spirituality is just one more dimension that we must be aware of when dealing with issues of sustainable development goals (SDGs). We recognise it and can make it work for *rahmaān lil `ālamīn*'s global *Ummah* as well as for the rest of humankind. It is therefore timely to examine spirituality in relation to its global applicability. This publication on SDG 18 is the first of its kind not only in our university but also in many other parts of the world. It is meant as a vehicle to advance the cause of spirituality, values, and culture in humanising sustainable development. More significantly, though, is to show that although this dimension is intangible, it is currently gaining relevance in global discourse, which is what our analysis of this edited book will focus on. This book highlights how urgent it is to come up with a new SDG namely SDG 18, that addresses the role of spirituality, values, and culture in not only humanising sustainable development but also maintaining the harmony needed to support both ecological and human civilisation in a complex and globalised world.

As the world moves towards chaos and post-normal complexities and dynamics, it is only prudent to rethink our concept of what sustainable development entails. As a result, it is critical that the taxonomy, structure, and function of development be critically examined in order to improve articulation and orientation. Any viable development viewpoint must contain a thorough and integrated understanding of who the human being is. The human being is defined not only by his body, mind, intellect, brain, and senses, but also by the forces of his soul and heart, values and character, culture, and social acts. Therefore, the human being is a synthesis of these physical, psychological, mental, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, moral, social, cultural, and civilisational forces, all of which must coexist in harmony and balance. Sustainable development must target holistically the entire human person as the driving force of growth and civilisation if it is to reclaim balance and efficacy.

Among other things, SDG 18 addresses the issue of balance and harmony in the formula for sustainable development. If one desires to see future-balanced growth, spirituality, values, and culture must be

reprioritised and institutionalised as part of the mainstream sustainable development narrative and worldview, as well as policies, strategies, and action plans.

The SDG 18 creates an exceptional chance to revisit the 17 SDGs and ensure that spirituality, values, and culture become inherent and influential in guiding people and policies towards balance and harmony in a conscious way. SDG 18 has a significant impact on overall sustainable development activities by promoting ethical leadership, values-driven governance and management, social-oriented activities, indigenous wisdom and culture, and civilisational-cultural engagement as well as exchange for the benefit of humanity and planet wellbeing.

The SDG18 framework and narrative aim to influence not only the tangible aspects of sustainable development, but also the intangible, in which the soul, heart, mindset, attitude, behaviours, and cultural understanding become central to SDGs and progress. Education has a significant role to play in nurturing the holistic and harmonious human being (Insan Sejahtera) and sustaining a balanced society and civilisation in this era and beyond. As a result, education must be transformed as the driving force for the betterment of human life and civilisation.

I am thankful to Prof. Abdelaziz and Prof. Khaliq for taking the noble initiative in producing this pioneering book, SDG 18: Spirituality, Values, and Culture in Sustainable Development - A Future Worldview for the Future. The book is not only timely and enlightening but also bold and courages! It offers insights and perspectives on SDG 18 as a much needed perspective to humanize the SDGs, and its manifestations in a variety of contexts for sustainable development.

I am also glad that many renowned scholars and experts have contributed to the book. I would like to thank the following authors: Prof. Jasser Ouda for his chapter, 'Maqasid and Ethics of Sustainability: An Integrated Framework for Development'; late Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Mohd. Kamal Hassan and Dr. Nur Jannah on 'Islamic View of Spirituality and Sustainability'; Prof. Odeh Al-Jayyousi for his insights on 'Islam, Spirituality and Sustainable Development', Prof. Zainal Abidin Sanusi and Idayu Mumtaz Iskandar for their perspectives on 'Towards Spirituality - Conscious Higher Education: Case Study of International Islamic University Malaysia'; Dr. Mohammad Ismath Ramzy, 'Religiosity as a Core Factor of Intercultural Competence (IC)'; Datuk Prof. Azizan

binti Baharuddin, ‘Civilisational Dialogue for Peace with Human and the Environment towards an Integrated Balanced Framework’; Prof. Suhaimi Mhd Sarif and Yusof Ismail, ‘Humanising Governance and Management: Spirituality and Management Putting into Practice’; and Assoc. Prof. Dzuljastri Abdul Razak and Md. Siddique E. Azam for their views on ‘Humanising Economy: Spirituality and Sustainability for Circular Economy’. Besides the above, there are two more chapters by the editors themselves, Prof. Abdelaziz Berghout: ‘SDG 18: Spirituality, Values, Culture and Social Action for Sustainable Development and, ‘Prof. Khaliq Ahmad: Shared Values (Vision) for Good Governance in the Pursuit of Sustainable Economic Growth’.

In my chapter titled ‘SDG 18 and Humanising Education: Model of a University the World Needs in the Post-Normal Era,’ I proposed the idea of SDG 18 standing for spirituality and its role and function in sustainable development. It explained how education can become an authentic change agent and how humanising is critical in any effort to balance sustainable development holistically. If one wishes to change the human being and society for the better, an integrated and value-driven educational model is a must. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) has adopted the ‘communiversity’ approach, in which the university and society collaborate seamlessly to transform individuals and communities through the whole-person and community approach. In addition to teaching and research, the university should act as a catalyst for social change.

In summary, a part from being a source of knowledge, innovation, and solutions for the advancement and betterment of civilisation, universities should act as agents of societal transformation. I fervently hope that this book will help to embrace on SDG 18 as a driver for balancing and humanising sustainable development as a whole. I am confident that the book will spark meaningful debates not only among intellectuals and academicians, but also among policymakers, social activists, leaders, and professionals on a local and international scale. Engaging all relevant stakeholders and partners is the first step towards success in this noble endeavour without spirituality remaining intact.

**DZULKIFLI ABDUL RAZAK,
PROF. EMERITUS TAN SRI DATO’**

Preface Second Edition

This agenda of sustainability originally was a response for certain pertinent questions by Muslims and other adherents of faith alike for the sake of human existence. These questions are: what kind of world do we want to live in? How can we nurture and preserve it, whilst ensuring social and economic progress? What is needed in our ecosystem to ensure lasting peace? And how do we work individually and collectively towards making the world a better place? There are attempts to answer them and are even more pressing in the context of modern-day challenges. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations (UN) to be achieved by 2030, focused on People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership (the five Ps) was perceived after the futile attempt of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But these are the hardware of the scheme of the things. The missing link was the software. Culture is the software, the glue that binds humanity together: from our traditions and practices passed down to us over generations; to our creative expression of the world around us; and our innovative imagination of the future, culture is all around us. And yet, in the UN Agenda 2030 there is no specific goal on Culture. It is not formally recognised alongside the three pillars of development — social, environmental and Governance (SEG).

The present book entitled, ‘SDG 18 Spirituality Values and Culture for Humanising Sustainable Development’ published by International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) is a futurist in its worldview and an attempt to synthesize the above thesis and anti-thesis to balance the scenarios. The book offers a refreshing yet critical perspective on the current sustainability discussion grounded in Islamic worldviews. It advocates to normalize themes of spirituality, values, and culture in the sustainability dialogue. The global sustainability agenda calls for the transformation of education to contribute to transforming societies but does not address factors that can motivate this fundamental change in humans as individuals and as a collective. This book aims to positions spirituality as most important dimension that encompasses all the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs)



Overall, this book delivers multilayered and comprehensive arguments to position spirituality in the sustainability discussion. While distinctions between what is considered either spirituality or religion are sometimes fluid, the potential of spirituality to foster change when serving as a foundation of hope, resilience, and to include values and belief systems is clear and convincing. When the individual chapters are viewed together, the idea of a whole-institution approach emerges that addresses students and learning, curriculum, thought leadership and scholarship, management, governance, and the role of a higher education institution in the community. The first edition of the book was launched by Her Majesty, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah at the IIUM, Gombak campus during April, 2024.

The book became a hot cake and sold out fast. However, the demand for a new print and reprint become overwhelming. The editors and the publisher are required to look into the global demand for the book increasing after the book were reviewed by experts especially from the West and East alike, we decided to bring the newly edited version as second edition to fulfil demand of the book to make it available to the students, teachers, policy makers and corporate sector.

The release of this second edition of *SDG18: Spirituality, Values, and Culture for Sustainable Development (A Future Worldview)* is meant to spark and inspire more serious discussion about the components of the

present sustainability model that are missing. As the book's editors, we urge readers and policymakers to go beyond just using SDG18, as a mere number, to show the need for spirituality, values, and culture as key parts of a sustainable development paradigm that can help people and save the planet from the terrible effects of selfishness, greed, corruption, injustice, and ego-centric arrogance. Our approach to sustainable development is more about balancing the tangible and intangible elements as well as strengthening spirituality, values and culture along with other existing factors. We want to bring back human values and humanity centered approach in a time of confusion and disruption. We want scholars, experts, and researchers from all fields and disciplines to come together and work on a new, integrated worldview for the future of sustainable development that balances spiritual and material forces and promotes the cause of responsible humanity and civilization for the good of people, civilization, and the planet. But we need to be careful that these huge concepts won't become a reality until we make actual changes and transformations that start from within us. The will and resolve to act is the path forward.

Editors:

30 June, 2025

Professor Abdel Aziz Berghout

Prof. Khaliq Ahmad

Acknowledgment

This book focuses on spirituality for sustainability agenda from the *Maqasid* perspective, a missing link from modern-day organisations, including the UN agenda of SDGs. Earlier on, the importance of IQ was overemphasised. In contrast, emotional intelligence (EQ) is currently said to be a better predictor of organisational performance, thus leading to organisational sustainability through institutional loyalty. Sustainable growth and development, as agreed upon by the United Nations Agenda 2030 for ensuring the future of millennials as prior to the SDGs, it was MDG (millennials Development goals), will only be possible with inculcating values inscribed by major organised faiths globally. Therefore, spirituality and its pursuit by adherents of faiths will be crucial to strive for a sustainable environment, respect for the scarce and naturally bestowed resources, avoiding wastage, and respecting the rights of others, especially future generations, to achieve not only gross national product (GNP) as an index of growth but also gross national happiness index (GNH) that will matter the most for our next generation.

Coming from an Islamic perspective, it is unwise for corporate organisations to ignore the importance of spirituality within their professional lives. The period we find ourselves in – moving from work as subsistence to work as livelihood – entails a great challenge in that we are constantly concerned with wealth (for the fear that it might diminish, and one is left in a state of ‘loss’). Therefore, to balance the self in such testing times would necessitate an appreciation of spirituality and its contingent effects. Novel management methods need to be put in place to incorporate such an understanding. Spirituality in the workplace entails human beings to seek nourishment for both poles, as it were, i.e., the vertical relationship with God and the horizontal bond with fellow human beings, as well as the ecosystem.

Our conversation on spirituality will necessarily lead us to its scope within the workplace. We are well aware that such an implementation is not easy, as spirituality is, in and of itself, difficult to ‘pin down’. However, we look to cultivate shared ideas of compassion, which cuts across different religious frameworks. It is all about care, empathy, and truthfulness with

others. Our suggestion also revolves around being effective at work, without undermining the relationship that one has with his/her colleagues.

The present book titled ‘SDG18 – Spirituality, Values, and Culture for Humanising Sustainable Development: A Future Worldview’ stresses the importance of spirituality in addressing activities, frameworks, plans, and policies in a sustainable and value-driven way. The book concludes that any successful sustainable development activity will depend on how spirituality is understood as the binding factor, promoting both happiness and contentment.

This book is edited, and experts from an Islamic spirituality perspective write the different chapters. To us, it is an effort in the right direction to link sustainability with spirituality.

Congratulations to all the chapter contributors, Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dato’ Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, IIUM Rector, Prof. Dr. Abdelaziz Berghout, Prof. Dr. Khaliq Ahmad, Prof. Dr. Jasser Ouda, late Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Kamal Hassan and Dr. Nur Jannah, Prof. Dr. Odeh Al-Jayyousi, Prof. Dr. Zainal Abidin and Idayu Mumtaz Iskandar, Dr Mohammad Ismath Ramzy, Datuk Prof. Dr. Azizan binti Baharuddin, Prof. Dr. Suhaimi Mhd Sarif and Yusof Ismail, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dzuljastri Abdul Razak and Md Siddique E Azam.

We thank all of them for their contribution and wish them grand success in their academic endeavour to realise a better and more equitable world order as a mercy to all, as this has been encapsulated in the IIUM song. We hope policymakers, academics, and students, including management practitioners entrusted to govern, will find this ISTAC - IIUM Publications, a handy companion in bringing back the soul to Sustainable Development Goals achievements by 2030 meaningful.

We thank the academic and administrative staff of IIUM in general and ISTAC in particular for their help and support in this publication. Not to forget the Graduate Research Assistant, the language editor, and others who have been patient in working on this project during the preparation of the draft of the manuscript till the end. We also appreciate our friends, well-wishers, and family members’ encouragement. Finally, our gratitude goes to Almighty Allah (SWT) for everything Who has alone blessed us with life and liveliness.

The editors believe this book will likely benefit various people, such as students and the academic community alike, including professionals and practitioners. This book could be used as a reference book and research material that depicts the fundamentals of Islamic faith and knowledge for the rise and fall of future civilisations. Graduate Students will explore and understand their knowledge of sustainability as a subject matter in Islam and *Maqasid Shari'ah* to apply the same in the emerging world order and the broader global perspectives.

Editors

Professor Abdel Aziz Berghout
Professor Dr. Khaliq Ahmad
ISTAC,
Kuala Lumpur
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