



Contemporary Relevance of

ISLAMIC THOUGHT

Third Edition

Edited by
Thameem Ushama



**IIUM
Press**



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To
Emeritus Professor
Tan Sri Dr Mohd. Kamal Hassan

A distinguished professor, a Malay intellectual, a proponent of Islamisation of Self, and Integration and Islamicisation of Human Knowledge, an advocate of the Relevantisation of the Islamic Heritage, a founding Shaykh al-Kulliyah of the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge, a founding Dean of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, now known as AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), our beloved and honourable brother, an intellectual godfather, murshid and murabbi for IIUM staff and students, a man of sincerity, integrity, piety, fraternity, hospitality and generosity, author of the concept paper for the International Islamic University Malaysia, and a former Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs, and Rector of the International Islamic University Malaysia who had a futuristic and visionary outlook for the Muslim ummah and all of humanity.



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Transliteration Table

Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
اَ	a		أَ، إَ	an
أُ	u		وُ	un
إِ	i		يَ	in
أَ، إَ، آَ	ā		ؤَ	aw
أُو	ū		يَّ	ay
يَ	ī		ؤُ	uww, ū (in final position)
			يَّ	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: <http://rotas.iiu.edu.my>

Foreword to the Third Edition

by the Former Rector of
International Islamic University Malaysia

I am pleased to note that Professor Thameem Ushama, editor of the book, has revised his second edition of *Islamic Thought and its Contemporary Relevance*, published in 2016 by IIUM Press, and renamed it *Contemporary Relevance of Islamic Thought*. The work aligns with numerous improvements and a responsible research trend in line with the process of the “Relevantisation” of Islamic thought, which refers to an intellectual activity of *Iṣlāh* (reform), *Tajdīd* (renewal), *Ijtihād* (independent reasoning), *Iḥyā’* (revival), *Taṣhīḥ* (correction), *I’ādat al-Nazar* (reexamination, reinvestigation, reconsideration, revision) and *Binā’ Jadīd* (new construction) of Islamic revealed knowledge disciplines. It is an academic effort to reexamine classical or ancient Islamic works, treatises or manuscripts to highlight their relevance, usefulness, novelties and uniqueness. Included is a relevant interpretation of classical Islamic thoughts, concepts, explanations, interpretations, jurisprudential edicts, exegetical and theological elucidations in the contemporary context to ensure its application is free from conflicts, inconsistencies, incompatibilities and contradictions.

It is our firm belief that Islamic thought has to be presented through the process of “Relevantisation” to provide answers and solutions to theological, political, economic, cultural, moral and intellectual issues; addressing confusion of the younger generation, chaotic administrative and management systems, a crisis of confidence and identity, failure of leadership and external and internal challenges from various secularising, modernising, liberalising, pluralising and relativising trends. The contemporary civilisation based on secular modernity and the autonomy of human reason displaying symptoms of severe crises and inevitable collapse must be dealt with through intelligent solutions in light of reformed Islamic thought.

In developing the revised Third Edition of the book, which includes incredible improvements to the previous edition and the inclusion of two new chapters, the editor solicited the assistance of a dedicated group of academics and specialists who had previously contributed. In light of what earlier scholars and thinkers have researched, articulated, and considered their relevance to the modern era conceptually, epistemologically, philosophically, and methodologically, this volume is regarded as an academic tool that will shape the understanding of contemporary Islamic thought rather than just being another work in the conventional sense.

Raḥmatan li'l-Ālamīn, one of the University's catchphrases and core principles under the *Sejahtera* Academic Framework, or SAF, is discussed in the book's first chapter to motivate and alert readers of its need and significance of nurturing the attribute of compassion, benevolence, kindness and generosity and consider the well being (*Sejahtera*) of humankind including other species in the universe. The discourse laudably explains to the audiences how the Prophet, peace be upon him, was compassionate, generous, merciful and kind to all organisms and creatures in the cosmos; consequently, the ideas are pertinent and must be put into action in the context of the University. SAF values are ones that academics are not only required to manifest but incorporate into their lectures, tutorials, research, consultancy and community engagement activities in which the concept of *Raḥmatan li'l-Ālamīn* plays a prominent role in moulding the students.

The book's subsequent three chapters examine the viewpoints of Muslim intellectuals on the religious and philosophical underpinnings of nationalism, feminism, and secularism to inform whether they harm the *ummah*, as they have specific objectives and promote the values of Western civilisation. Another crucial issue is a response to Western criticisms of the Prophet, peace be upon him, which displays the prejudices of a few secular authors. Another chapter discusses the validity of Maududi's approaches to Qur'anic exegetical discourse, as there is an assumption that Maududi, a twentieth-century Muslim exegete, does not conform to the commonly accepted viewpoints and the methodology of antecedent Qur'anic exegetes. The chapter on spiritual ethics and character development is similarly significant because there is a need to instil excellent character and behaviour in individuals, particularly young and adolescent leaders who will become future leaders.

Malaysia has witnessed many ideological and doctrinal swings and deviations in recent years. Deviant religious components, thoughts, doctrines, and movements are complicated to recognise because they affect people's creeds, propelling them closer to heterodoxy. Hence, the chapter on new religious movements awakens people to know this problem, challenge and dilemma and helps them make the appropriate decisions and correct judgements. The book deserves proper recognition, as it contains a chapter on the Qur'anic definition of sovereignty and explains how it relates to modern Islamic theories of politics because multiple views and interpretations regarding the sovereignty of Allah, The Almighty, exist. Establishing an excellent governing structure while considering the Islamic concept of sovereignty, in which Allah is the ultimate authority and the only legitimate power is disclosed. Chapters on Iqbal's concept of selfhood, al-Ghazzali's influence in the Malay world, Islam's impact on the Malay language, Maududi's vision of Islamic education, and Meherullah's socio-religious and political thought are all relevant to understanding the Islamic thought and its contemporary relevance.

Looking over the chapters, I am confident that this book will benefit students and others both globally and locally, particularly those seeking to comprehend a variety of themes in Islamic thought and their contemporary relevance. Hence, I congratulate the authors and the editor on the third revised version and implore Allah The Almighty to grant them greater insight, knowledge, and discernment to produce more top-notch works of this standard to lead the way and the world for sustainable development.

DZULKIFLI ABDUL RAZAK, Professor Emeritus
 Tan Sri Dato'
 Former Rector
 International Islamic University Malaysia

Foreword to the Third Edition

by the Dean of
AbdulHamid AbuSulayman
Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and
Human Sciences (AHAS, KIRKHS)

This book, the *Contemporary Relevance of Islamic Thought*, is, in actuality, a revised version of Professor Thameem's *Islamic Thought and its Contemporary Relevance*, published by IIUM Press in 2016. The primary purpose of this improved edition is to align it with the "Relevantisation" process that IIUM is promoting, and of course, with extensive improvements to suit the responsible research trends. In addition, to ensure its application is relevant, it includes pertinent interpretations of classical Islamic thoughts, novel interpretations, jurisprudential edicts, exegetical and theological elucidations based on contemporary circumstances.

More importantly, the *Contemporary Relevance of Islamic Thought* also addresses some contemporary challenges posed by the postmodern trends in theological, political, economic, cultural, moral, and intellectual issues, causing confusion among the young generation and generating a crisis of confidence, identity and leadership failure.

It is also important for me to note that this book is the product of a highly committed team of scholars and intellectuals at IIUM who have already contributed their chapters in the previous edition and continue to share their insights, knowledge, and wisdom in this volume. I am hopeful that this volume will be a useful guide and academic tool that will shape the understanding of contemporary Islamic thought in light of what previous scholars and thinkers have studied, articulated, and considered their relevance to the modern era conceptually, epistemologically, philosophically, and methodologically.

Needless to say, this book will assist individuals, particularly those seeking to comprehend a variety of Islamic ideas and their relevance to the current digital era characterised by a volatile and dynamic environment.

The concepts and principles discussed in this book could empower readers to confront the uncertain and complex demands of life, aiding them in responding to the ambiguous conditions that have disrupted the quality of life in society.

I hereby commend the writers and the editor for their third amended edition and beseech Allah, The Almighty, to give them more wisdom, understanding, and discernment so they can produce more excellent works of this level and pave the road for sustainable development of the *ummah* and humanity.

SHUKRAN ABDUL RAHMAN, Professor Dr.

Dean

AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge
and Human Sciences

International Islamic University Malaysia

Foreword to the Second Edition

Although this Second Edition partially reflects the research interest of the Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion, some of the issues in this volume mirror an important research trend concerning the “Relevantisation” of Islamic thought. It should be remembered that this Department organised two successful international conferences on Izutsu and al-Faruqi. These conferences reflect the more focused interest of this Department when it comes to contemporary issues regarding Islamic Thought and Comparative Religion. The first conference on Izutsu’s contributions to Islamic thought was well received, and selected articles were edited by Dr. Anis Malik Toha and published by IIUM Press 2010. However, the second conference on the contributions of al-Faruqi to Islamic thought will hopefully be published at the beginning of next year, 2017.

Since this foreword is about the current volume, one can safely say that Professor Thameem Ushama has assembled a diligent team of researchers. Let it be repeated that the issue of the relevantisation of Islamic thought is the most important agenda of the Department. This means, among other things, that the quality of the research on this area will reflect the achievements of the researchers in this Department and serve as one of the main selling-points for would-be postgraduate students. Because of this, I consider this volume to be an academic instrument that will redefine the future of the Department.

Though the title of this volume does not use the term “Relevantisation”, which was coined by Professor Mohamed Kamal Hassan prior to the publication of the first edition, this is what has been alluded to by the authors of the articles. Now, the concept of “Relevantisation” is well received and denotes all the activities of *Islah* and *tajdid* in Islamic sciences and other disciplines of knowledge.

IBRAHIM MOHAMED ZEIN, Professor Dr.

Former Dean

Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

Foreword to the First Edition

I am pleased to learn that the Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion is publishing a book entitled *Islamic Thought and Contemporary Relevance: A Discourse on Selected Issues*. This effort aligns with the objectives of the University's Knowledge and Virtue Camp and the Kulliyah's mission, which makes Islamisation and Relevantisation of Knowledge its niche area.

As Dean of the Kulliyah, I wish the Department and all contributors a successful journey in their intellectual endeavours. The Kulliyah hopes that the Department will continue to publish books on Usul al-Din, Islamic Thought, and Comparative Religion to benefit the Muslim *ummah* in the face of the many challenges posed by modernity and post-modernity.

BADRI NAJIB ZUBIR, Dr.

Former Dean

Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

Preface to the Third Edition

In conformity with the vision and official announcement of the University authority to produce edited books by all departments under a category known as ‘Knowledge and Virtue Camp 2011’, the Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion prepared this book, and IIUM Press published its first edition. Nine academic staff from the Revealed Knowledge Division contributed to this project. The focus herein is placed on (1) contemporary issues in Islamic thought and (2) the relevance of early Islamic interpretations to the contemporary realities faced by the Muslim *ummah*.

The second edition of the book was published by the IIUM Press in 2016, thanks to the IIUM authorities. Nine academic staff from the Islamic Revealed Knowledge Division contributed chapters to it. As the need for this book was on the rise among students and others, the Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion has decided to publish a second expanded edition, which contained three more chapters added to the first edition. These three chapters were [1] Secularism in the Discourse of Maulana Abdur Rahim, [2] Sovereignty of Allah in the Qur’ān: A Study of Selected Exegetes’ Views, and [3] Mawdudi’s View of Education and its Relationship with Islamisation of Human Knowledge. In revising and reviewing the contents of various chapters, the authors considered the concept of “Relevantisation” – the niche area of the Islamic Revealed Knowledge Division at the AbdulHamid AbuSulayman of Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS, KIRKHS).

The focus was placed on contemporary issues in Islamic thought and the relevance of early Islamic interpretations to the Muslim *ummah*’s contemporary realities. What we mean by “Relevantisation” is re-examination, re-assessment, and re-evaluation of interpretations of concepts, values, edicts, issues, articulations, exhortations, elucidations, explanations and illustrations by Muslim scholars of previous generations to see to what extent their interpretations are relevant, applicable, and valid for contemporary Muslim societies and nations.

Since the book's second edition has been sold out and keeping in mind the need for the book by students, staff and the public, a decision has been made to come up with a third revised edition by adding two more chapters to the chapters of the second edition. The two chapters are The Concept of *Raḥmatan li'l-ʿĀlamīn* and Meherullah's Socio-Religious and Political Thought.

It is our fervent hope that this book will be helpful to students of higher learning institutions, both inside and outside Malaysia.

THAMEEM USHAMA, Professor Dr.

Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion

AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS, KIRKHS)

International Islamic University Malaysia

Preface

to the Second Edition

By the grace of Allah, the first edition of the book was published by the IIUM Press in 2011, thanks to the IIUM authorities. Nine academic staff from the Islamic Revealed Knowledge Division contributed chapters to it. Focus was placed on contemporary issues in Islamic thought and the relevance of early Islamic interpretations to the contemporary realities faced by the Muslim *ummah*. The book also deliberated on issues such as Nationalism, Feminism and Secularism from the Islamic perspectives. As the need for this book is on the rise among students and others, the Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion has decided to publish a second expanded edition which contains three more chapters added to the existing work. These three chapters are: [1] Secularism in the Discourse of Maulana Abdur Rahim, [2] Sovereignty of Allah in the Qur’ān: A Study of Selected Exegetes’ Views, and [3] Mawdudi’s View on Education and its relationship with Islamization of Human Knowledge. In revising and reviewing the contents of various chapters, the respective authors took into account the concept of “Relevantization” – the niche area of the Islamic Revealed Knowledge Division of the KIRKHS. What we mean by “Relevantization” is re-examination, re-assessment, and re-evaluation of interpretations of concepts, values, edicts, issues, articulations, exhortations, elucidations, explanations and illustrations by Muslim scholars of previous generations to see to what extent their interpretations are relevant, applicable, and valid for contemporary Muslim societies and nations. It is our fervent hope that this book will be useful to students of the institutions of higher learning, both inside as well as outside Malaysia.

THAMEEM USHAMA, Professor Dr.
Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion
Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

Preface to the First Edition

In conformity with the vision and official announcement of the University authority to produce edited books by all departments under a category known as ‘Knowledge and Virtue Camp 2011,’ the Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion has prepared this book. Nine academic staff from the Revealed Knowledge Division contributed to this project. By the grace of Allah, the Department intends to publish edited books every year. The focus herein is placed on (1) contemporary issues in Islamic thought and (2) the relevance of early Islamic interpretations to the contemporary realities faced by the Muslim ummah.

THAMEEM USHAMA, Professor Dr.

Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences

International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

Introduction

Two decades of the new millennium have passed. It has brought no real changes, quality and positive improvements in human life worldwide. New ideas have emerged, several new techno-systems have come into existence, and a few new interpretations of life were found – a never-ending phenomenon. People have favoured and embraced new ideas and dimensions, yet serious drawbacks in achieving these objectives announced themselves. Even the concept of globalisation has not produced good results. What is more, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite discoveries and inventions in science and technologies over the years, it seems that ethics has been forgotten, integrity is ignored, corruption is rampant, morality is suppressed, immorality is glorified, criminals are protected, conscience is absent, and even evil deeds are normalised. Nonetheless, religious teachings are regarded as irrelevant, education becomes a commodity, money becomes God, and justice is a mere rhetoric. People live in a disastrous situation in the First or Third World countries. Almost all human-made ideologies have failed to sustain peace and well-being for humanity.

Amid the chaos and confusion, Islamic teachings promised salvation, hope and the way forward. The Islamic teachings, which are based on the Revelation and Prophetic Traditions (*Ahadith*), not only offer the light of guidance but also generate awareness among people to become more responsible for their families, society, nation and humanity. The Islamic doctrines create consciousness in people to realise the needs of human beings based on the human conscience. By that virtue, it also promotes constructive human relations between various groups and civilisations and aims to establish universal justice without discrimination between races, ethnic groups, and cultures. Consequently, human dignity is elevated, freedom is ensured, and equality is practised. In Islam, no principle emanates from any individual or the practice of a societal group granting it superiority over others. All humans are equal before the law of God, and no one is immune. All Muslims know that each person is accountable for their actions.

In light of the above, there is a need to provide a proper framework for people to analyse issues and solve problems in different fields. The Islamic perspective of looking at issues with the intention of solving community problems is vital. Such a move will eliminate misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding the role of religion, especially Islam, in this contemporary era, where globalisation and postmodernisation play a crucial role in interpreting and shaping the lives of individuals and society.

Realising the need for fresh views on many doctrinal, legal, juristic, and theological issues, this collection of essays was written by a group of academics at International Islamic University Malaysia. It discusses different dimensions of Islamic thought and their contemporary relevance. It contains fourteen chapters on *‘Aqīdah* and Islamic Thought, *‘Ilm al-Kalām*, Islamisation and Relevantisation, epistemological foundations of the Islamic worldview, and others.

It is appropriate to draw attention to the fact that the order of the essays herein is arbitrary. Each chapter focuses on a different dimension of Islamic thought and discusses its contemporary relevance. This timely rendering is believed to help keen readers, especially students, clarify crucial aspects of the contemporary Islamic perspective. In presenting arguments on several themes, the authors have taken into account and accorded priority to the Vision and Mission of the University as enshrined in its constitution.

As the mainstream media suffocates Islam with lies, fabrications, and rumours, Muslims face unprecedented hurdles and obstacles, resulting in severe crises. Several myths, misconceptions, and stereotypes attribute intolerance to Muslims, accusing them of lack of grace, love and compassion. The truth is that Islamic teachings call for universal peace, and even the word Islam itself connotes the concept of peace and security, in addition to the magnificent notion of *rahmah*, which is synonymous with compassion, grace, kindness, and benevolence. These values are deeply embedded in the Qur’an, which is revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad, and it serves as the cornerstone of Islam’s way of life.

Those who hold a pessimistic view of Islam tend to misinterpret Islamic ideals negatively, thus casting the image of Muslims as tyrannical, intolerant and extremist, whereas, in actuality, it is a biased

constructed perception. In fact, it is far from the truth. Historically, Islam and Muslims have contributed constructively to the world civilisation for centuries. This contribution has also been missed, overlooked, neglected, disregarded, and devalued. The mainstream media and state-sponsored institutions, agencies, and organisations have ignored their past.

The Islamic worldview is based on the reality of the cosmos. It has a futuristic outlook, so it is always relevant to everyone. Studying the concept of *Raḥmatan li'l-ʿĀlamīn* as expressed in the Qurʾan and the Prophetic Traditions is essential to understand accurately the Islamic way of life. Hence, in the first chapter, Thameem Ushama explains how Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, comprehended, promoted and demonstrated compassion with unwavering integrity as a model for his followers throughout generations.

Mohamed Iqbal, Ḥasan al-Bannā, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Sayyid Quṭb, Sayyid Abul Aʿla Mawdudi and Mohammad Natsir, the prominent Muslim revivalists of the twentieth century have argued that nationalism – as defined, understood and applied by Western philosophers – is not only unacceptable but hazardous to Islamic *ummatic* unity and solidarity, mainly if it is uncritically applied to achieve the goals and aspirations of the Muslim nations, be they heterogeneous, homogeneous, secular or Islamic. In Chapter Two, Thameem Ushama takes a deeper look into nationalism and analyses the views of those Muslim revivalists in order to highlight their interpretations, propositions and critiques regarding the application of nationalism in the Muslim world. This essay also explores the implications of nationalism for Muslim societies or countries. It concludes with Islamic sources and comments from Muslim scholars and is accompanied by recommendations for consideration by policymakers who may be applying nationalism uncritically.

In his third chapter on ‘Feminist Discourse in the Muslim World,’ Abdul Salam Mohamed Shukri traces the origins of the feminist discourse in the West and the different trends of this discourse to understand better feminist debates and the roots of Muslim feminist discourse within this movement in the Muslim World. The chapter discloses the objectives of feminism and explores the implications of adopting it, especially by Muslims. It concludes that the concept of feminism, which is essentially modern, has been developed based on the Western experience and went

through different phases in the Western world. Moreover, like all isms of the modern world, its values – especially in its radical forms – have come to be associated with antithetical components to Islamic positions and is thus not acceptable to many Muslims. However, Muslim scholars and many Muslim women have presented this ideology with Islamic motifs while utilising extrinsic ideas to fight for the emancipation of women and qualify their feminist impositions with Islam.

In the fourth chapter on secularism, the authors discuss and briefly describe Maulana Abdur Rahim's biographical profile. Then, in the second section, there is an analysis of the concept of secularism, including its definition as propounded by eminent Muslim intellectuals. The third section of the essay discusses Muslim responses to secularism. The fourth section analyses Abdur Rahim's interpretations of secularism and its theoretical dimensions. This essay also draws attention to the significance of Abdur Rahim's discourse in the context of Bangladesh Muslim Society. His views on three primary ideologies are central to this discourse, and his methodology of rejecting secularism is a crucial phenomenon herein.

Western approaches to the Prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are also found in the writings of Western writers in the Middle Ages. Therein, the Prophet was depicted as a demon, Christian heresy and madman. In today's context, there are also numerous criticisms and mischaracterisations towards the Prophet, particularly following the September 11, 2001 events. Critics, however, changed their tune, particularly with the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, after which they saw no threat from Muslims. However, this change by Western writers to positively portray the Prophet is short-lived. Their negative construction of discourse on the Prophet has continued to prevail.

In the fifth chapter, Che Amna Bahari and Fatima Abdullah argue that these criticisms occurred in all forms, including caricatures, cartoons, films and even toy products. Indeed, these attitudes show that it is true that the Prophet himself has said that to uphold the teachings of Islam is as if we are holding amber; it burns us to the core. This chapter studies Western criticisms of the Prophet, focusing on those that took place during the twentieth century, as related to his position as a Messenger

to all humankind, his Prophethood and his position in the exalted office as the last and final Prophet. This discussion also provides responses by Muslim intellectuals refuting many false claims and fabrications.

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) was one of the most influential 20th-century Muslim scholars and wrote many books on Islamic thought to relate the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* with an integrated approach to modern life. He started a revolutionary mission at a time when Western civilisation was at the height of its intellectual, technological, economic and political power and when nearly the entire Muslim world was in the clutches of Western colonial rule. The clouds of this gloom were cast upon Muslims all over the world. In this situation of turmoil, he challenged the spell of Western thought and developed a new *‘Ilm al-Kalām* to meet the intellectual challenge of the West. To achieve this goal, in 1932, Mawdudi began writing *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* to present the message of the Qur'ān. His major work is the *Tafsīr Tafhim al-Qur'an*, an accumulation of his lifelong experiences and knowledge for modern educated readers. In the sixth chapter, Yousuf Ali discusses aspects of Mawdudi's approaches to understanding the Qur'ān. The study evaluates critically the selected aspects of the work. It examines whether or not Mawdudi explained the Qur'ān according to *aḥādīth*, the views of the Companions, *asbāb al-nuzūl* and other reliable sources. Last, this chapter analyses his responses to significant theological and philosophical issues in opposition to contemporary Islamic and Western thinking.

Good character development in Islam is primarily a process of dealing with one's emotions, argues Fatimah Abdullah in Chapter Seven. She argues in her essay 'Spiritual Ethics and Character Building' that Islam helps to build and support good emotions like mercy, love, generosity and courage, and it aims to fight and suppress negative emotions such as jealousy, anger, selfishness and cowardice. Therefore, character building would have much to do with patience and perseverance in controlling and reinforcing negative emotions, leading to positive ethics. Manipulation of emotions leading to good ethics would also lead to a spiritually and psychologically healthy life. Modern research tells us that in management and industry, those who reinforce themselves with spiritual motivation and who are emotionally intelligent tend to attain a more competitive edge over others who are not so inclined.

Furthermore, modern social and organisational psychology reveals that a lack of intellectual intelligence does not mainly cause failure to achieve success in work and attaining prosperity and happiness, nor is it caused by a deficiency of knowledge about job know-how. It is mainly due to negative emotions that lead to stress and psychological disorders. These disorders are, in fact, the result of an unhealed soul. To heal the nation's soul, we must employ psycho-spiritual ways to fight these disorders. Moreover, if we succeed, prosperity will undoubtedly be achieved. Thus, the chapter highlights the significance of spiritual ethics in its approach to dealing with human emotions, which can help in Islamic ethical training. This is of value because the development of a good character in Islam is predominantly a process of dealing with one's emotions and with the emotions of others.

In Chapter Eight, Wan Azam examines the phenomenon of new religious movements in Malaysia, focusing primarily on groups that deviate from the country's mainstream Islam. These movements are collectively called '*Kumpulan Ajaran Sesat*' in the local parlance. After examining its definition, the essay discusses some of the groups categorised by the Malaysian government as *sesat* or deviant. The essay focuses on traits found in these groups that are considered deviant by the Malaysian government and on those matters that exerted influence in their doctrinal orientation, such as *wahdat al-wujūd* (unity of being), the influence of Shiite messianic fixations as well as syncretism.

The ninth chapter on the concept of the "sovereignty of Allah in the Qur'ān" provides an in-depth analysis based on the classical Muslim exegetes. It applies qualitative methodology with a particular focus on content analysis. It studies the views of selected early exegetes (*mufasssirūn*) and explores the relationship between the concept of sovereignty and the fundamental Islamic belief. The author, Thameem Ushama, claims that no in-depth research has been conducted on the concept of the sovereignty of Allah with a comparative approach between Islamic political thought and the views of early exegetes. Therefore, this ground-breaking study introduces and analyses the views of selected early exegetes with a comparative approach between them.

The chapter also explores new dimensions of thought on the relationship between Islam and other political thoughts and enriches the

discipline of Islamic political thought. As stated, there is a link between the “Sovereignty of Allah” in Islamic political thought and the Islamic creed (*‘aqīdah*). However, some confusion arises about its meaning, application and function in this era where globalisation plays a pivotal role in transforming people’s minds in favour of Western or secular culture, even affecting Muslims. The essay’s author advocates that it is appropriate to analyse the humanmade law of Western civilisation from the perspective of Islamic political thought. As contemporary Muslim political thinkers have debated the issue, it must be critically analysed from the Qur’ānic point of view. The discussion herein also includes an explanation of the role of Islamic *‘aqīdah* in the concept of the sovereignty of Allah and discusses important recommendations for an Islamic state to play its role in establishing peaceful co-existence.

The tenth chapter expands on the lessons of Iqbal, who believed that one of the main reasons for Oriental decadence was a philosophical system that inculcated self-negation and self-abandonment. This system advocates an attitude of apathetic interest in action, renunciation of the world and asceticism, all of which counter the original spirit of Islam. Iqbal disagreed with this approach and introduced a unique concept of *khudi* or selfhood. The concept of self-presented is the most crucial phenomenon under discussion as it is central to his philosophy upon which the rest of his thought structure is based. For Iqbal, understanding the nature of the self is essential to understanding the nature of society and the principle of its growth. According to Iqbal, the self is an active and creative force in which a person should strive to achieve a rich personality and participate in the affairs of the universe to suit his apical position as a vicegerent of God on Earth. He offers that this aligns with the Qur’ānic perception of man as an ascending spirit capable of changing the entire course of history. Thus, according to Iqbal, man’s moral and religious ideal is not self-negation but, to the contrary, must be self-assertion or self-realisation.

In the chapter, ‘Muhammad Iqbal’s Theory of Selfhood,’ Adibah Abdul Rahim discusses the nature of the self as expounded by Iqbal and how the self grows into a powerful personality. She puts forth that Iqbal does not only preach self-realisation by individuals, but his idea also prescribes suppression of individualism for the preclusion of any

collective and concerted effort of communal benefit. At this juncture, her essay also discusses the nature of mutual relationships between the individual and the society wherein humans live, move and exist. Iqbal has recognised a necessary relationship between the individual and society. He sees society as a must for the proper growth and development of humans and that it is only in a society that humans can achieve self-realisation.

In the past and until today, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī's writings (d. 505/1111) have left a significant impact on scholars in the Malay World. For Malay Muslims, his teachings provide actual Islamic knowledge and guidance to the right action. Towards this, Megawati Moris analyses selected Jawi works written by four scholars in the eleventh chapter. These are translations and adaptations of al-Ghazzālī's essential works on Sufism written during the period 1700-1900 and are considered the principal agents for the transmission and dissemination of al-Ghazzālī's teachings to Muslims in the Malay World, most of whom do not understand Arabic. In the renditions of the original works, Malay scholars incorporated the obligatory (*farḍ 'ayn*) in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the principles of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*) and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and offered their commentaries as well as those from scholars other than al-Ghazzālī's. These works have indicated that Malay scholars were not just translators but were also creative interpreters and transmitters of al-Ghazzālī's teachings. Nonetheless, the contents accord with al-Ghazzālī's original teachings and additions were always interpreted within the confines of al-Ghazzālī's exquisite spiritual and theological frameworks.

The twelfth chapter, 'The Impact of Islam on the Malay Language' is inspired by a theory on the Islamisation of the Malay Archipelago by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who, in his influential work *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* has set forth a definitive general theory on the Islamisation of that archipelago. Al-Attas had argued that the arrival of Islam to the Malay Archipelago was the most momentous event for the Malays and constituted a new period in their history when the process of Islamisation occurred. Al-Attas first defined the term "Islamisation" in his study of the metaphysical system of Hamzah Fansuri, the greatest Malay poet and Sufi who lived at the end of the 16th century, entitled *The Mysticism*

of *Hamzah Fansuri*. According to al-Attas, Islamisation involves “the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural traditions opposed to Islam, and then from secular control over his reason and language. The man of Islam, therefore, is he whose reason and language are no longer controlled by magic, mythology, animism, his own national and cultural traditions that oppose Islam, and secularism. He is liberated from both the magical and secular worldviews.”

The concept of Islamic education is widely discussed in Chapter Thirteen. Several scholars have expressed their interpretation of Islamic education. One of the twentieth-century scholars who explained this concept was Abul A’la Mawdudi from the Indian subcontinent. Herein, Mohammad Nazmus Sayadat evaluates the reality and application of the concept of ‘Education’ in Mawdudi’s discourse based on one of his greatest works, *Mawdudi on Education*, thematically. Sayadat highlights the necessity of education and its relationship with the Islamisation of knowledge concerning the incredible impact of the secular education system in society to create a new dimension of understanding and responses to this issue, as found in the discourse of Mawdudi. Furthermore, he critically analyses Mawdudi’s views of the Islamic education system. He also makes some recommendations to the current Muslim thought to promote the Islamisation of knowledge among Muslim societies.

The socio-religious and political ideas of Munshi Meherullah are covered by Abdullah Masud in Chapter Fourteen. The chapter highlights Meherullah’s brief history before discussing his background, education, career, and contributions. He discusses his works *Kshristiō Dharmer Asāratā* (Christianity’s Hollowness) and *Jawāb al-Naṣarā* (Reply to Christians). Additionally, Meherullah was a proponent of religious revisionism and social, political, cultural, educational, and economic reforms in Bangladesh. In the chapter, the author also discusses his disagreement with Christian missionaries.

All Arabic words and names are transliterated to ensure correct reading. Rules approved by the IIUM Thesis Writing Manual are used to transliterate the words. A table regarding the transliteration of Arabic words is attached. Footnotes and references are printed at the bottom of every page. A detailed bibliography is appended to help further the study by providing relevant references in the field and an index for easy access to the topics.

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He is the author of seven books: Ḥasan al-Bannā: Vision and Mission; Methodologies of Qur'ānic Exegesis; *Sciences of the Qur'an: An Analytical Study*; *Issues in the Study of the Qur'ān, Sayyid Quṭb between Reform and Revolution and Islam and Extremism* and *History and Sciences of the Qur'ān* which won the Ismail al-Faruqi Award in 2014. He also edited two books, which are 1) *Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage: Dimensions of Thought* and *Islamic Thought and its Contemporary Relevance: A Discourse on Selected Issues*. His book, *Methodologies of the Qur'ānic Exegesis*, has been translated into Malay and published in Indonesia. He has published many articles in well-acknowledged, internationally-refereed academic journals. He has attended several national and international conferences and seminars to present papers. He constantly researches contemporary Islamic thought, non-Muslim perceptions of Islam, Muslims in Malaysia and other countries, and the Qur'ānic sciences.

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Contemporary Relevance of ISLAMIC THOUGHT

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This book analyzes selected key issues in Islamic thought and its contemporary relevance. It is an attempt to conform to the mission of the Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion of the International Islamic University Malaysia, which is committed to the “Relevantisation” of Islamic heritage, in addition to the Islamicisation of Human Knowledge. The principal objective is to enable students, staff, and people to obtain a correct and proper understanding of Islamic thought and inspire them to present an Islamic worldview by applying the method of moderation (*Wasatiyyah*). This study falls within 14 chapters. It deals with the concept of *Rahmatan Li'l Alamin*, nationalism in the discourse of Muslim revivalists, the feminist discourse in the Muslim world, secularism in the discourse of Maulana Abdur Rahim, Muslim response to Western criticism of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Mawdudi’s approaches to the Qur’anic exegesis, spiritual ethics and character building, new religious movements in Malaysia, which promote controversies and dissensions, the sovereignty of Allah in the Qur’an, Muhammad Iqbal’s theory of Selfhood, the influence of Imam al-Ghazzali in the Malay World, the impact of Islam on the Malay language, Mawdudi’s view of education; its relationship with Islamisation of Knowledge and Meherullah’s socio-religious and political thought.

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