

# IIUM at 25

The Path Travelled and The Way Forward

Edited by  
**Syed Arabi Idid**



**IIUM Press**

## **IUM at 25: the Path Travelled and the Way Forward**

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## The Integration of Human Sciences and Revealed Knowledge in the KIRKHS

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*Mohd Kamal Hassan\**

**D**r. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, the second rector of the IIUM, was never tired of emphasizing the need to reform the Muslim mind by integrating the revealed knowledge disciplines with the social sciences and the humanities, so that the disciplines and the scholars of those disciplines would be fully informed of, if not conversant with, the existing sociopolitical realities and the actual human conditions in all their diversities and complexities. Similarly, the human sciences would be infused with Islamic revealed values, perspectives and worldview in order to desecularize their contents and begin to enquire into the human condition from a holistic and *tawhīdic* perspective. These academic and intellectual reforms, he strongly believed, would go a long way towards ameliorating the miserable condition of the Muslim *ummah* throughout the world and reestablishing the holistic and balanced Islamic civilization that the Muslims once built with great flourish as universal centres of learning, innovation and enlightenment in West Asia, Spain (Andalusia) and India. The need to Islamicize the contemporary Western-inherited knowledge, particularly in the human sciences, and the need to make the revealed knowledge disciplines more realistic, relevant and contemporaneous—without altering the fundamental teachings and tenets of Islam—became the new intellectual focus of the IIUM as it expanded with the establishment of the Kulliyyahs of Engineering, Medicine, Architecture and Environmental Design, Natural Sciences and Information and Communication Technology.

The opening of the office of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in the IIUM in the mid-nineties at the Petaling Jaya campus reinforced and spurred the Rector's new agenda of what was popularly known as "Islamization of Knowledge" in the IIUM, although the need to desecularize the Western-inherited human knowledge and infuse Islamic values in the contemporary professional disciplines was already implied in the initial model, albeit without using the label "Islamization of Knowledge". The books and journals published by the IIIT in English and Arabic, the

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scholars who visited the university under the sponsorship of the IIIT and the seminars conducted by the IIIT in the IIUM and outside, generated a greater awareness of the new paradigm shift among the academic staff and the postgraduate students in the university. It was also realized by the concerned Muslim intellectuals then that this epistemological and educational transformation had major implications in contemporary Muslim culture and history but it would require a considerable period of gestation, development and maturation before it can produce tangible results, but the "seeds of the new tree of knowledge", as it were, have been sown, not only in the soil of the IIUM in Petaling Jaya and Gombak but also in several Islamic institutions of higher learning in different parts of the world.

When the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS) started its first academic year in July 1990 as the third Faculty of the IIUM, after the Kulliyah of Laws and the Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences, the university was, in fact, embarking upon the most challenging intellectual and academic enterprise ever undertaken by any Islamic university in the world. It was and still is the first of its kind for a variety of special features which contribute to its uniqueness. When the idea of the kulliyah was conceived in 1989, it was quite well-known that the number of Muslim social scientists or social scientists with an Islamic orientation in the world then was extremely small. Where to get the adequate teaching staff with an Islamic orientation to lead the various departments of the social sciences and humanities was the most worrying question for the present writer. If the proposed new faculty were to be a carbon-copy of faculties of secular-oriented behavioural sciences and humanities, we could easily draw upon many institutions of higher learning to recruit the academic staff we needed. But the proposed kulliyah had to be based on the university's Philosophy, Objectives, Vision and Mission unique to the IIUM. The present writer remembers vividly asking Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, in 1989, how many Islamic psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists there were in the world. They could be counted on the fingers of two hands! Of the few available in the world at that time, how many could we entice (with our meagre salary) to come to work in the IIUM? Dr. AbdulHamid was undaunted. He had thought about it and figured it out. His determination, optimism and resourcefulness were reassuring. Through his international academic contacts and with the assistance of the network of regional and country offices of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, he was able to bring scholars from India, Pakistan, the U.S.A., Africa and the Middle East to manage the brand new departments of sociology and anthropology, psychology, political science, communication, history and civilization, philosophy, English language and literature, Arabic language and literature and Islamic revealed knowledge and heritage. With the establishment of the new kulliyah, the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge was transformed into the Department of Islamic

Revealed Knowledge and Heritage with courses leading to a bachelor's degree.

A few years later, the new department of education was added to the kulliyah and the Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage was expanded to become a major division of the Kulliyah with three departments—the Department of *Uṣūl al-Dīn* and Comparative Religion, the Department of *al-Qur'ān* and *al-Sunnah* studies and the Department of *Fiqh* and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*. In 2002 the department of education was expanded into an independent institute, and a new Department of General Studies was formed which offered compulsory university courses for all students of IIUM. Today, the kulliyah is the largest faculty in the university, with eleven departments, around five thousand students and some two hundred and fifty full-time academic staff. The kulliyah is divided organizationally into two academic and administrative divisions, respectively:

1. *Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Division*, with the following departments in it.
  - 1.1. *Fiqh and Uṣūl al-Fiqh*
  - 1.2. *Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion*
  - 1.3. *Qur'an and Sunnah Studies*
  - 1.4. *Arabic Language and Literature*
  - 1.5. *General Studies*
2. *Human Sciences Division*, with the following departments in it.
  - 2.1. *Political Science*
  - 2.2. *Psychology*
  - 2.3. *Sociology and Anthropology*
  - 2.4. *Communication*
  - 2.5. *History and Civilization*
  - 2.6. *English Language and Literature*

The Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences is, in fact, made up of three different branches of knowledge, which, in Western or other local universities, are known as “Islamic Studies”, social sciences and humanities or arts.

## The Rationale and Justifications for the New Kulliyah

We did not want to use the term “Islamic Studies” in the IIUM, because of its misleading connotations. In the traditional Islamic heritage, the terms *‘ulūm al-dīn* (sciences of religion) *‘ulūm dīniyyah* (religious sciences) *‘ulūm naqliyyah*

(transmitted sciences) or *'ulūm shar'īyyah* (obligatory religious sciences or sciences dealing with the *Shari'ah*) were used. In line with the resolutions of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah in 1977, which divided human knowledge into "Revealed Knowledge" and "Acquired Knowledge", we decided to use and popularize the term "Revealed Knowledge" in the IIUM. This was to reemphasize the epistemological preeminence of divine revelation (*wahy*) as supreme knowledge in itself, revealed directly by Allah (SWT) to Prophet Muhammad (SAAS). The religious knowledge disciplines, in Islamic epistemology, are based on divine revelation as embodied in the Qur'an and the authenticated Sunnah of the Prophet. The role of sound human intellect (*'aql*) is very important in Islamic epistemology to complement divine revelation, and to expand the frontiers of human knowledge in harmony with the truths, values and norms of revelation. Thus the knowledge acquired by means of the intellect or reason, as embodied in the physical sciences, the social sciences and the humanities, has to be in accordance with the divinely revealed truths, values and norms. But as far as modern social sciences or humanities are concerned, they are the products of secular-oriented institutions of higher learning in the West and are very much coloured by the sociopolitical contexts and paradigms of knowledge in which the disciplines were developed. Concerned Muslim intellectuals and scholars have expressed serious reservations as well as severe criticism since the early fifties regarding the influences of secularism, atheism, agnosticism, skepticism, materialism, positivism, existentialism and scientism in Western social sciences and humanities. Therefore the IIUM. has a big role to play in producing, developing and disseminating the humanities, which is in harmony with the *tawhīdic* worldview and value system.

We chose the term "human sciences" to denote the interrelatedness of social or behavioural disciplines with the humanities which, in the IIUM, were represented by the disciplines of English language and literature, Arabic language and literature, philosophy, history and civilization. Besides, the nomenclature "human sciences", as used in several universities around the world, facilitates the integration of the humanities, the sciences of religion and the social sciences which have hitherto developed in isolation from one another. Its usage is a recognition of the mutual interdependence of these traditionally compartmentalized disciplines which would, hopefully, promote a more holistic understanding of human beings' intellectual diversity, societies and cultures. We hoped that the human sciences (social sciences and humanities), guided by the values and norms of divine revelation, at the hands of Islamic academics and intellectuals, would once again regain their spiritual and metaphysical moorings to realize the true meanings of human servanthood (*'ubūdiyyah*) to Allah (SWT), vicegerency (*khalāfah*) and moral responsibility and trust (*amānah*). Then these sciences, instead of celebrating man's irresponsible autonomy, self-idolization,

meaninglessness and absolute relativism in the name of post-modernism, would then constitute an integration of profound reflection (*tafakkur*) and empirical research, spiritual recollection (*dhikr*) and consciousness of the One True God (Allah) in understanding human social behaviour and social facts.

Together with the awareness of the secularity of the Western-inherited social sciences and humanities, there was the realization in the early 1980s that the Islamic religious sciences too needed to undergo the process of reform (*iṣlāh*) and renewal (*tajdīd*) in order always to remain relevant to contemporary issues and intimately connected with the societal and cultural realities of the present. The abuse of the religious sciences, the loss of direction in the development of those sciences, the unhealthy rivalry which sprang up among the worldly-motivated religious scholars, the artificial compartmentalizations and rigid specializations of the major branches of religious sciences and the profanization of transcendental knowledge were already apparent in the time of *Hujjat al-Islām* ("The Proof of Islam") al-Imām al-Ghazzālī (1058–1111 AD), and they were disturbing enough for him to embark upon one of the most comprehensive and long-lasting spiritual reforms and moral reconstructions of the sciences of religion, resulting in his magnum opus, the monumental *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of the Sciences of Religion). The work is a major achievement in reunifying the sciences of *'aqīdah* (creed), *sharī'ah* (Divine Law), and *akhlāq* (spiritual ethics and morality) and emphasizes the dimension of the Hereafter (*al-ākhirah*) as an epistemological and ethical framework of the religious life of Muslims.

It was strongly felt by the concerned Muslim intellectuals that it was high time that the Muslim *ummah* produced a new breed of Islamic religious scholars, social scientists and specialists in the humanities. It has been widely recognized in Muslim learned circles that Muslim societies were in dire need of religious experts and scholars who possess a rational and objective understanding of social problems and issues, as well as Muslim social scientists, professionals, civil servants, politicians and managers who possess moral-spiritual consciousness and religious commitment to bring about the necessary social changes in consonance with the teachings and objectives of Islam. Bearing in mind that many Muslim countries have inherited and assimilated a secular-based model of modernity or development from the secular or godless intellectual traditions of the West, the need for the Islamically-oriented social transformers or change agents could not be underestimated.

While the graduates of the conventional "Islamic Studies" curriculum tended to be narrow-specialists and were generally not exposed to the methods of analysis and vocabulary of the social scientist, the social sciences or arts students were mainly exposed to secular humanistic or materialistic visions and approaches in understanding social phenomena. The secularistic

or skeptical orientations which inform and influence the perspectives or worldview of a liberal-democratic or a socialistic or Marxist or post-modernist social scientist would be detrimental to the efforts of building holistic and *tawhīd*-based Islamic societies and civilizations. Many Third World countries have experienced the Westernization and secularization of indigenous cultures and institutions, in the name of “progress” and “modernity”, as a result of depending upon the recommendations and formulae provided by the secular-oriented agencies or social scientists who were devoid of moral-spiritual consciousness or a mindset which integrates worldly socioeconomic concerns with other-worldly ends and transcendent values. The new kulliyah, it was envisaged, would be in a position to produce, when it would be fully developed and equipped, the much-needed Islamicized social and human scientists as well as the socially-relevant and socially-competent revealed knowledge workers.

In planning the curriculum of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, discussions were held in 1989 with ten experts in the social sciences from the local universities, which included the Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, of the same university. They were of the opinion that:

- a) The graduates of the new kulliyah would be greatly needed in our society by virtue of the integration of the two branches of knowledge which have been separated in the secular models of higher institutions and the proficiency in both English and Arabic. English would be the medium of instruction in the human sciences, while Arabic would be the main medium of instruction in the Islamic Revealed Knowledge Division.
- b) That the major-minor system in a four-year period (a major in the human sciences has to minor in revealed knowledge and vice versa) and the double-degree option in the additional fifth year (a B.A. in Human Sciences with another B.A. in Revealed Knowledge and vice versa) would be more advantageous to the graduates in coping with a more competitive job market and employment situation in the near future.
- c) A two-year pre-university programme in English and Arabic for the prospective Malaysian students would be necessary for the undergraduates to achieve the level of language proficiency required for majoring in human sciences or in Islamic revealed knowledge and heritage.

The long-term objective of the kulliyah, as conceived initially in 1989 was to achieve, in the world of higher learning, a harmonious integration and fruitful symbiosis of the human sciences with Islamic revealed knowledge



in order to provide alternative perspectives for understanding, explaining, analyzing, predicting and guiding human action and behavior based on the *Weltanschauung* of *tawhīd*. Through this process of integration and reform (*iṣlāh*), it would be expected that a methodology of Islamic religious studies that would be at once traditionally authentic and relevant to contemporary issues would emerge. Towards achieving this long-term objective, it was crucial that the university employ some of the best brains in the Muslim world who were both highly committed to the vision and professionally competent to work out the formidable task of integrating the two hitherto divergent universes of human knowledge.

Looking back through the eighteen years of its existence, KIRKHS struggled to find the right quality of staff and to retain the good ones. In what could be considered as the First Phase or the “Establishment Period” of its development (1989-1994), there was a frantic search for the academic staff to head the new departments and additional staff to run the undergraduate programmes. The orientation of the newly recruited staff to the ideological-philosophical vision of the university and the new kulliyah was given serious attention. In the Second Phase (1994-2005), the Kulliyah embarked on its postgraduate programmes, drummed up the mission of Islamization of the human sciences, started the compulsory Diploma of Human Sciences course for revealed knowledge instructors and the Diploma of Islamic Revealed Knowledge course for instructors in the human sciences; held conferences on the Islamization of the human sciences; published *Intellectual Discourse* and *at Tajdid* (in Arabic) as two important journals of the university, and increased its publications in English and Arabic. The expansion into the postgraduate programmes, both at the MA and PhD levels, made it imperative for the Kulliyah to recruit and retain the most valuable intellectual assets for all the departments of the Islamic revealed knowledge division. But our salary scheme, being tied to the Malaysian government universities scheme, was not too attractive, to begin with, to entice some of the best brains in the world to serve in the IIUM. However, Dr. AbuSulayman’s ingenuity and innovativeness managed to improve the perks. The whole package offered by the administration at that time made the IIUM competitive and attractive enough to the Muslim senior lecturers and professors from overseas to consider working in the university. But the 1998–1999 Asian financial crisis severely affected Malaysia and proved disastrous for the fortunes of the IIUM. The university has not quite recovered from the financial meltdown and was unable to reinstate Dr. AbuSulayman’s attractive remuneration scheme at the time. Several international staff of high academic quality were forced to leave for greener pastures elsewhere. The “exodus” and the continuous brain drain clearly put the kulliyah in dire straits with respect to its highly ambitious, yet necessary, mission.

In spite of the set-backs and the discouraging constraints, the kulliyah, under the leadership of its dean, Associate Professor Dr. Hazizan Noor,

entered its Third Phase (2005–2010) with a sincere resolve to put its house in good order with an efficient and consultative management system. As the biggest kulliyah in the IIUM, having to cope with roughly five thousand students, manage three different branches of higher learning in a single entity, using two different languages (English and Arabic), with people of diverse backgrounds belonging to three intellectual and administrative traditions, the KIRKHS is arguably the most challenging kulliyah to manage. If one did not have a good understanding of the significance of the kulliyah's noble civilizational mission, one could easily succumb to the temptation of separating the two divisions into two separate kulliyahs. While such a solution would contribute to administrative efficiency, the separation and the "divorce" of the two major divisions would lead to the restoration of the secular model of higher education and the return to the Western dichotomy of the secular and the religious sciences. It would also mean, ironically, the triumph of the secular mentality in an Islamic university. Eventually, if the secular and pragmatic mentality prevailed, the name "Islamic" in the the IIUM would become a mere label of a de facto secularized institution. Hence, the temptation to go down that road has been consistently resisted by the leadership of the kulliyah and the university.

In the Third Phase, the kulliyah had to contend with a range of new challenges arising from the Ministry of Higher Education's new policies on quality standards, competitiveness of universities in the era of the globalization and the commercialization of higher education, the marketability and the employability of the graduates, the acceleration of international networking efforts, the advent of research-intensive universities, the university-industry partnership for the commercialization of research outputs, the establishment of income-generating consultancy or professional training agencies and the identification of the niche areas of faculties and departments. The Kulliyah also had to embark on a strategic plan in line with the Balanced Scorecard agenda of the IIUM introduced in 2005.

Under the deanship of Dr. Hazizan, the kulliyah finalized its reformulation of the official vision and mission as the ideological basis and the key factors in determining the future direction of the human sciences and the Islamic revealed knowledge divisions. The finalized vision of the Kulliyah reads as follows:

*"To Be the Centre for Research and Educational Excellence in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences."*

In this vision statement the emphasis is on the long-term objective of becoming a research centre which excels as an institution of higher learning and education. The emphasis on research excellence was not there in the first two phases of the kulliyah's growth, but it is now given high priority because the university leadership decided in 2007 that the IIUM should become a research-intensive university in the near future.

As for the mission of the kulliyah, the final version reads as follows:

*“To Be the Centre for the Integration of Revealed Knowledge and the Human Sciences.”*

This is a reaffirmation of the original mission which underlines the unique identity and structure of the kulliyah. The curriculum of the KIRKHS implements the concept of the integration through the systems of the major-minor, the major-major and the double-degree which was introduced by Dr. AbuSulayman. Thanks to his system the graduates of the KIRKHS have not had a serious problem of employability after graduation with a bachelor’s degree because they have been exposed to English and Arabic and they have a minor, either in one of the human science disciplines or in Islamic Revealed Knowledge. Since 2007, the scope of the selection of the minor or the second major has been extended to include the Kulliyah of Economics and Management, the Kulliyah of Laws, the Kulliyah of ICT as well as the Institute of Education. This flexibility was provided for in view of the increasing problems of the marketability of graduates of arts, “Islamic Studies” and the human sciences in the Malaysian economy. The mission of integration has also helped to produce more balanced and integrated personalities who will be better able to cope with the ethical or religious issues in a multi-racial and multi-religious society such as Malaysia.

The next mission statement is the following:

*“To Be the Centre for Islamicization of the Human Sciences.”*

This spells out explicitly one of the aims that Dr. AbuSulayman had in mind when he planned the establishment of the KIRKHS at the beginning of his rectorship. This was also one of the aims of the IIIT which he led in the 80s. To assist the human science instructors in their endeavour to implement this mission, the IIUM started the Diploma in Islamic Revealed Knowledge programme which benefitted the academic staff who had little or no exposure to revealed knowledge resources. The Islamicization of certain aspects of human knowledge which violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith, divine law and ethics, as we know it, is enshrined, in the Constitution of the IIUM and constitutes one of its *raison d’être*.

It was, therefore, befitting the special nature and identity of the KIRKHS that the mission of Islamicization, together with the mission of Integration, became one of the major academic agenda of the kulliyah, its shortcomings and handicaps notwithstanding. The founding heads of the departments of the human sciences disciplines realised the urgency of this mission and with the help of senior lecturers and professors who were committed to the mission, the mission statements of the departments were finally formulated to be in line with or supportive of Islamicization. Some articles and books which emphasise the role of Islamicization in several disciplines of the social sciences including that of English language and literature and Arabic

language and literature, have been published. More of such materials could be expected in the future as more research output gets published in local as well as international journals. The Islamicization mission has also helped in the development of Islamic perspectives and the inculcation of Islamic values among the academic staff and the graduates of the human science programmes. It strengthens the university's reputation as a major reference centre for professional consultation on many Islamic matters.

The third mission statement is:

*To Be the Centre for Relevantization of Revealed Knowledge Disciplines.*

The main focus of this mission statement is the reform of the disciplines of Islamic revealed knowledge such as *uṣūl al-dīn* (theology), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles and fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence), *ʿulūm al-Qurʿān* (the sciences of the *Qurʿān*), *ʿulūm al-Hadīth* (the sciences of the Prophetic tradition), comparative religion and Islamic daʿwah (propagation). The word "relevantization" underscores the need to make those disciplines relevant to contemporary human and social issues and highly useful or indispensable for the solving of individual, social, national or international problems and issues. The process of "relevantization" involves the necessary reform (*iṣlāḥ*) of the curriculum content and methods of teaching and evaluation as well as character development. It also requires periodic efforts of renewal (*tajdīd*) or restoration of the authentic and original spirit, purpose or authoritative sources of the Islamic religious sciences in order to get rid of unwarranted accretions, misguided innovations, and ineffective or counter-productive teaching methods, the accumulation of unhealthy traditions which came to be regarded as sacrosanct or orthodox.

These are problems peculiar to the practitioners or experts of the Islamic religious sciences. Thus the current practice of the regular review of the curriculum, references, qualifications of the instructors, methods of teaching, assessment, evaluation and examination questions by competent external reviewers and assessors carried out by the kulliyah, from time to time, has to be commended. The departments of Islamic revealed knowledge disciplines have, in the last few years, held several important international conferences and workshops which dealt with the relationship and impact of Islam and the religious sciences upon various aspects of contemporary problems in this era of ICT, globalization, Islamic renewal, civilizational dialogues, technological revolutions and environmental degradation. The importance and relevance of the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (objectives of the Divine Law), the application of different types of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) to new and contemporary issues, the need for appropriate Islamic religious discourse (*al-khiṭāb al-dīnī*) in this age of globalization and the Internet, and other topics of contemporary global significance, have been discussed and addressed by lecturers of Islamic revealed knowledge in the last five years. All these contemporary concerns and new ideas, concepts or intellectual

trends have a positive impact upon the quality of teaching, publication and consultancy in the revealed knowledge and heritage division of the kulliyah.

The fourth mission statement is formulated as follows:

*To Be a Centre of Research and Innovation in the Disciplines of Revealed Knowledge and the Human Sciences.*

The kulliyah leadership is encouraging all the academic staff to be involved in research projects in addition to teaching, since funding is made available for such efforts. The Kulliyah has obtained the ISO 9001—2000 Certification in Research Management in 2004 and in Teaching and Learning in 2007. With 181 staff with Ph.D. degrees from a total of 236 academic staff, the kulliyah has established a few research clusters, increased the number of research units (including the Applied Psychology Centre, Women for Progress Research Unit, the Electoral Studies Research Unit and the Computer Assisted Language Learning Research Unit), research projects and publications of the staff. The best researcher award at the university level in 2007 was won by a senior professor in the Department of Political Science and the two university flagship journals produced by the kulliyah have earned international reputation for maintaining high quality standards. In 2006 the Kulliyah started publishing the quarterly *Kulliyah Research Bulletin* “as part of a holistic academic package that aims at developing competent and versatile academics in the face of emerging challenges”, said the dean in his foreword (Vol. I, No. I, January 2006). Research methodology and advanced ICT courses have been made available to the academic staff of the KIRKHS, the large majority of whom are young lecturers involved in heavy teaching at the undergraduate as well as postgraduate levels.

The intensification of the internationalization mission has been undertaken with partners in Singapore, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, the U.S.A. and the U.K., in the last few years. A major interdisciplinary research project was successfully completed with external funding and sponsorship in 2006. The present writer believes that this huge reservoir of potential quality researchers and intellectual assets of the kulliyah will soon contribute significantly to the growing research culture in the KIRKHS as the university moves forward along the trajectory of the research-intensive university destination. As these young scholars, many of whom are products of the integrated major-minor programmes and dual language competency system of the KIRKHS, developed into seasoned researchers and experienced professors in their respective fields of specialization through the next decade, the missions of integration, islamicization and “relevantization” will bear the much-awaited fruits mature enough to offer an alternative intellectual discourse and paradigm of knowledge based upon the epistemology of the *tawhīd* and the reunification of the Divine Text and the human context, ‘aql and naql, reason and revelation, Divine Truths and social realities, matter and

spirit, this world and the Hereafter, the transient and the transcendent, *al-dīn* and *al-dunyā*. Given the current constraints and drawbacks of the existing scenario, one should not be unduly alarmed if the maturation process of integration and islamization consumes more time than was originally expected.

## Conclusion

With all the ideological-philosophical underpinnings of the university well anchored in the first two decades of its existence, the university is now moving fast forward to reach the goal of comprehensive educational excellence, assisted by its well formulated strategic plans under its enlightened and committed leadership. Nevertheless, the dual challenges posed by the national stakeholders, on the one hand, and the global *ummatic* obligations on the other hand, will always be competing for attention, but the leadership's ability to balance the two interests in a harmonious synergy will ensure the survival and progress of this unique institution. The Islamic identity rooted in the *tawhīdic* theology, cosmology, epistemology, axiology and anthropology makes it unique, but the intellectual, scientific, technological and human products manufactured in the "Garden of Knowledge and Virtue", from the culturally fertile and Islamically moderate Malaysian soil are becoming more and more "marketable", although an Islamic university shall never worship at the altar of the new "deity", the Market, nor shall it become a tool to serve only the needs of the market or industry. The national as well as the international stake-holders, while investing financially and materially in this institution, should be made aware that they are in fact investing in the construction and development of the strong pillars of a holistic, humane, ethical and balanced society and civilization which promises "the good in this world" (*ḥasanah fī al-dunyā*) and "the good in the Hereafter" (*ḥasanah fī al-ākhirah*).

The present writer, who was involved in the IIUM project since January 1982 and has been working in it for the last twenty-five years, has developed a special spiritual bond with this unique institution, its civilizational transformation vision and its holistic educational mission. After stepping down as third rector in April 2006, he decided to encapsulate his feelings, hopes and aspirations in a poem entitled "The Garden On A Ship" for he believes that the university will continue to sail through uncharted waters and plough through unforeseen challenges, but as long as it remains faithful to its philosophy, vision and mission and the team of leaders remains committed, Allah (SWT) will help it to reach its destination. The present writer views the journey and the challenges as nothing less than an intellectual *jihād* of the Muslim *ummah*.

## The Garden on a Ship

*I look back, dear brothers and sisters, to the community's collective submission,  
Decades ago, the Muslim Malay elites wanted a ship to undertake a unique mission,  
To grow on board, a garden of human knowledge and virtue, in harmonious fusion,  
To rejuvenate the ummah, strangled by imperialism and crippled by internal division.*

*Youths from all over flock to the beautiful garden on a ship,  
Because the fruits it produces are really worth the trip,  
More are coming from the Occident and the Orient to relish its honey drip,  
Its name and fragrance filling the corridors of OIC with lively gossip.*

*The garden on a ship integrates human reason with divine revelation,  
Enriching professional sciences and skills with ethico-spiritual dimension,  
Blending beneficial modernity with moral values and sacred tradition,  
Thus immunizing future leaders from the cancer of moral corruption.*

*I boarded the ship in 1983 not dreaming of leadership,  
The divinely-inspired mission alone animated the companionship,  
When Providence forced upon this unworthy slave to pilot the ship,  
I prostrated before Rabb al-'Ālamīn seeking His compassionate Lordship.*

*The captains before me came from overseas and were well-known scholars,  
They steered the ship into the open sea with Malaysian leaders providing the dollars,  
Tan Sri Dr. Abdul Rauf and Dato' Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman were intellectual pillars,  
Without their sacrifices and foresight the ship will not be riding the wave of global cheers.*

*Before the stress takes its toll, I wanted to leave the captain's deck at sixty,  
By then the ocean would be deeper and the waves certainly mighty,  
The ship needs a new captain to steer through new challenges safely,  
Only at sixty-four could I join the crew below while thanking The Almighty.*

*I'm now an ordinary crew working in my own cubicle,  
In the belly of the garden-ship with books I love to cuddle,  
No longer burdened with multiple pressures and stressful chronicle,  
Wishing the garden would flourish and the ship speeding on with no hassle.*

*Offering gratitude to The Almighty, the Malay leaders, the Majlis, the President, the  
wonderful team,  
I seek your forgiveness, dear brothers and sisters, for anything I had done that had hurt  
your self-esteem,  
The IUM garden-ship must move forward to greater frontiers with new steam,  
The new captain Professor Dato' Dr. Syed Arabi Idid needs our sincere support to fulfill the  
dream.*

*This garden of knowledge and virtue is, in fact, a divine amānah,  
Let's tend to it, brothers and sisters, with great care and maḥabbah,  
Our striving for the garden to grow is indeed an act of `ibādah,  
Let's purify our nafs and make the culture of quality, integrity and excellence our risaalah.  
The fruits of this garden will soon be all over the world,  
Embodiments of integrated personality providing solutions in a new mould,  
The managers and workers of the garden must protect this stronghold,  
From stragglers and rogues who drop in to fish in our lakes or steal our gold.*

*The intellectual jihād that is IIUM aims at resurrecting the ethical civilization,  
Providing alternatives to secularized models of progress and modernization,  
Glorifying the Chief Priest of a temple deviates from its noble intention,  
Glorifying Allah, The Source of Knowledge is the dhikr of this blessed institution.*

*May Allah subḥānahu wa ta`ālā protect this Garden of Knowledge and Virtue from the  
manipulations of people with selfish and self-centred motives! Āmīn yā Rabb!!*

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