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(26 October 1942 – 23 February 2023)

A PEEK INTO THE MIND OF A *TAWHĪDIC* THINKER AND FUTURIST

It was slightly after the noon time on May 8, 2019, when I received a message from Professor Emeritus Dr. M. Kamal Hassan (*Raḥimahu’Llāh*).

Dear Nur, *assalaamu alaikum*. Fyi the 15th Century Hijriyyah beginning on the 1st Muharram 1401 fell on the 10th of November 1980. So, the next 1st Muharram 1501 which heralds the next 16th Century Islamic era should be somewhere in 2079, or 2078 or 2077. I would like to get the exact date such as 10th November 1980, but I do not know how to calculate it. Could you ask Dr Akram or Dr Akmal or Prof Hamzah to calculate and get the right date, day and year of the Gregorian calendar. This is a very important fact and info I am going to use soon in a project that I will disclose to you as soon as you can give me the exact day, date and year of the 16th Century Hijriyyah. Thank you for your kind assistance. *Wassalaam*.¹
(12.23 hour)

I informed the late Professor that I could check for him without needing to refer to the experts. I quickly gave him the date, November 17, 2077, which I got from GOOGLE. He was indeed surprised at the swift reply and insisted that I check with the experts. I quickly used other easily accessible date-converter applications online and gave him the results from three other sites, all of which gave the same date. I told him that I was indeed getting very curious. He simply replied, “*TQVM. I will let you know tomorrow.*”

Dr. Nur Jannah Hassan
Head of Scholars Channel (*Qanāt al-Mashāyikh*),
OFIIR-CENTRIS, IIUM.



I received the following text almost exactly a day later, at 11.16 hour on May 9, 2019,

Assalāmu ‘alaikum. Two days ago, Dato’ Sri Idris Jusoh visited me at ILIM. He told me that he came up two years ago with the idea called "Firdaus 2050" a metaphor representing the ideal Malay Muslim living in 2050. Firdaus possesses several excellent and exceptional qualities. He combines several remarkable skills with Islamic traditional values. I told him we need to make our younger generation to be aware of the 16th Century Hijrah which would come, *in shā' Allāh* about 60 years from now.

He was excited and called that vision *Al-Hijrah Al-Jadidah*. The New Hijrah of 2077 (after your calculation). I said the 15th Century Hijrah was received with great enthusiasm, optimism and euphoria, but sadly 40 years into it the Muslim world is in deeper crisis, disarray, chaos and disunity. We should make our present and younger generation to think and plan for the advent of 16th Century Hijrah. Other people are using Vision 2030, Vision 2050 and so on. We should have in mind Vision 2077 together with Vision *Al-Ākhirah*. The next day he messaged me and said "Why dont we set up a committee to work out a strategic plan for *Al-Hijrah Al-Jadidah*". He wanted me to head the committee. I replied to him saying that I would think and reflect on his proposal and would get back to him later when I have some concrete ideas to share with him.

I am thinking of involving CENTRIS and maybe ISTAC too, which has a futuristic concern in its new curriculum in the Committee and others, and maybe by the 1st of Muharram 1441, which falls in September 2019, we could have a Seminar to commemorate the formation of a committee or an association or an informal group to think academically and scientifically about the future of the *ummah*... I prefer a good Muslim scientist to head the group, someone like Tengku Azman, Professor Wan Ramli or Professor Yusof of Islam Hadhari, etc. Fyi Ziauddin Sardar and his colleagues already has a body which specialises in future studies. But we can also have our own organisation. Maybe we can get Tan Sri Zul [referring to IIUM's 6th Rector] to head and then IIUM can play a leading role. I may have to talk to him about this idea when things become clearer in my head *bi idhniLlāh*.

So, think about it and give some thought before we approach the Rector, or the other scientists mentioned above. The strategic plan requires innovative and systematic thinking, sound knowledge of various aspects of the human and planetary conditions, lots of scientific data, and collaboration with likeminded scholars or organisations, etc, etc. So that's it for the time being. You are the third person now who is being exposed to this futuristic and visionary idea. We need young scholars like you to be in the group. Thank you very much for your input on the date. Wassalām.²

This was the initial point (so I thought) of the journey that Professor Kamal Hassan (Raḥimahu'llāh) had embarked on in the trajectory of futures.

“EUPHORIA!”

Professor Kamal Hassan (Raḥimahu'llāh) related to me, on several occasions, how he travelled to Tehran to personally eyewitness and soak in the vibes and energy on the streets where the 1978 Iranian Revolution took place. With sheer determination, the people overthrew the Pahlavi Dynasty after 54 years of its iron-fisted rule, hence establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran on April 1st, 1979. This major event was considered by many Muslims as the harbinger of goodtidings that highlighted the advent of the new 1400 Hijrah, which fell on November 21st, 1979.

The *Ummah*, according to him, was taken with “euphoria”. The 15th Century Hijrah would be the century of Islam, with Ummatic resurgence and betterment, especially with the “waning of the era of Western imperialism and colonisation”.



The 1978 Iranian Revolution.

Alas! This euphoria was very short-lived.

The 1400s Hijrah sees the Muslim world in deep quandaries. Widespread socio-political and inner crises, decadence, corruptions, internal divisions, wars, environmental degradations, occupations, neo-colonisation, neo-imperialism, Islamophobia, and the list goes on. Muslim countries became the subjects of Western deceptions and lies – “9-11”, “WMD”, ISIS, “Osama Bin Laden”, sanctions, destructions, depreciation of Muslims’ currencies, annihilation of Islamic history, “antisemitism”, “war on terror”... Algeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Kashmir, Rohingyas, Uighurs, Bangladesh, Muslims in India... and of course Palestine.

Professor Kamal Hassan (Raḥimahu’Llāh) reasoned that the euphoria was not predated by careful and proper plans. Indeed, as Muslims had failed to plan, we have thus “planned to” fail. Examining the catastrophic events of the 15th century Hijrah, he initiated VISION 2077 Project in 2019. VISION 2077 Project is a long-term futures project for the Muslim Ummah in Malaysia. It works towards producing the narratives of the Ummah’s scenarios for favourable futures at the turn of next Century Hijrah, with 1st Muharram, 1500 falling on Saturday, November 28th, 2076.

M. KAMAL HASSAN’S FUTURES THINKING

It was on the night of August 17th, 2016, that I stumbled upon an old video online of Professor Kamal (Raḥimahu’Llāh) speaking to a group of foreign looking men. It did not occur much to the oblivious me, even after watching the whole video of 33:28 minutes, and sending the video to him the following morning. However, having been involved with the VISION 2077 project starting from the very beginning on May 8, 2019, it later dawned upon me that the Professor’s futures thinking did not emerge then, but much earlier. I then returned to the video and listened to it again – this time with a different fervour – that I noticed the visionary futures thinking of the Professor. The video recording was done circa mid-October 1999, when he spoke on the topic of “World Scenarios” at the Da’wah Academy, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Pakistan.³



Professor Dr. Mohd. Kamal Hassan speaking
on “World Scenarios” at the Da’wah Academy,

I began to analyse the nature of his works of the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s followed with his latest works in 2020s. I discovered the following patterns, where frequency is represented by the sizes of the font.



Analysing the patterns further to highlight futures-related themes, I discovered the following:



The themes marked with the black font, at the very least, must relate to futures. Not conventional futures, but uniquely Islamicised futures as how Allah commands in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of His Rasūl. Indications emerged with the beginning of his academic career in the 1970s, for instance with works on education and "Development and a Non-Economic Factor of Supreme Import". In the 1980s, his futures inclination became more succinct with "15th Century Hijrah – A *Muqaddimah* to a **New Era**". The 1990s saw a more distinct futures trajectory with, for example, "IIUM: A Human Resource Development Institution for the **Future Progress of the Ummah**". In the 2000s, he wrote with titles such as "The Expanding Spiritual-Moral Role of World Religions in the **New Millennium**", and "Da'wah in Malaysia: Personal Observations and Interpretations Regarding Obstacles and **Future Strategy**". The 2010s was punctuated with "Malay Intelligentsia's Quest for an Islamic University and the **Future** of IOHK in IIUM".

Looking into his *Salam Kasih*⁴ in the light of futures, one will not fail to notice his distinct inclinations beginning with the final lines of "*Generasiku Menghadapi Tamaddun Barat*" (My Generation in the Face of Western Civilisation) written in 1966. The inclination becomes more distinctly woven in the lines of "SMS to Sir Muhammad Iqbal" (June 2002) and "SMS from Iqbal to Brother Kamal" (June 2006). This is definitely apparent in "The Garden on a Ship" (July 2006) and *The Garden on a Ship* (Version 2012) (October 2012) with the following lines:

Our Work as Intellectual Jihād

The intellectual *Jihād* that is IIUM aims at resurrecting the ethical civilisation providing alternatives to secularised models of progress and modernisation.⁵

The most distinctive in *Salam Kasih* are the following lines of “*Generasiku 2, Pesanan untuk Generasi Abad 21*” (My generation, a message for the 21st century Generation), which I translated into English as thus:

Children and kins!

The Neo-Kuffar Neo-Crusaders army are encircling the Nusantara
With the Unity of Revealed and Acquired Knowledges from Aceh, Baghdad
to Cordoba

We make green and save the Nusantara

Because the Nusantara reserves the Rabbinic might of Awliyā’

A New Leadership, *Ūlū’l-Albāb* of the Malay Lands

Construct the Neo-Andalusian civilisation

Turn your Qiblah to Makkah one of the *Haramayn*

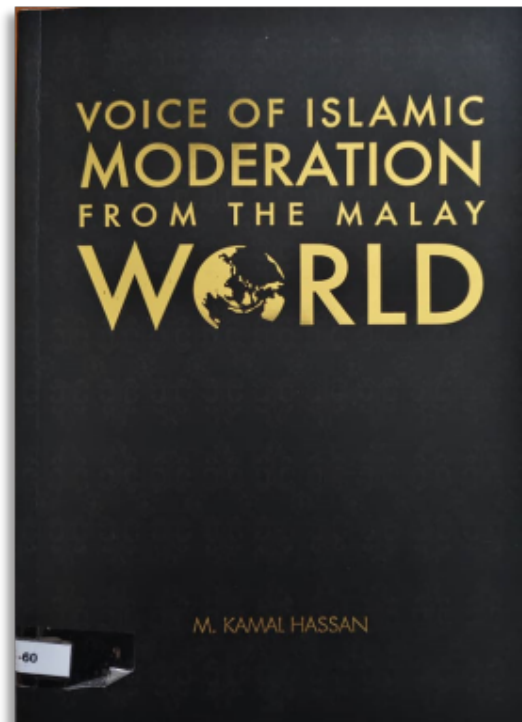
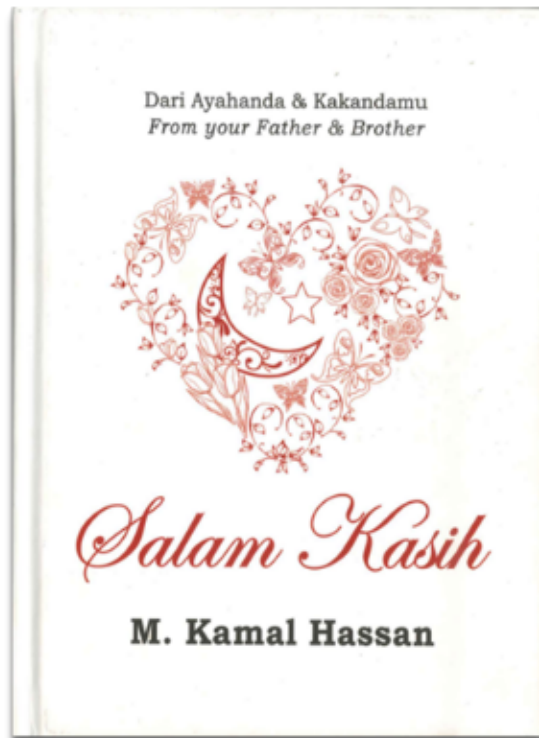
“A land most goodly, and a Sustainer Oft-Forgiving!” (Q. 34:15)

A TRUE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

Raḥmatan li’l-‘Ālamīn ⁶

VISION 2077 was established in 2019. The project had embarked, with his mentorship, to fulfil the characteristics and responsibilities of **Ummatan Wasata** (Q. 2:143), which is an “appointment” by Allah ﷻ, calling for major Ummatic transformations. This is so in order to fulfil the responsibility of **Islamic da’wah** as the *khaira ummah* (Q. 3:110), with the spirit of *raḥmatan li’l-‘ālamīn* (Q. 21:107) with the ethics of *ūlū al-albāb*. It is mandatory for the Ummah to be prepared (Q. 8:60) for the **rising phenomena** of *kufr*, hypocrisy, Christian evangelicals, Zionist Christians, Indian religious fanaticism, Chinese economic superiority, etc.

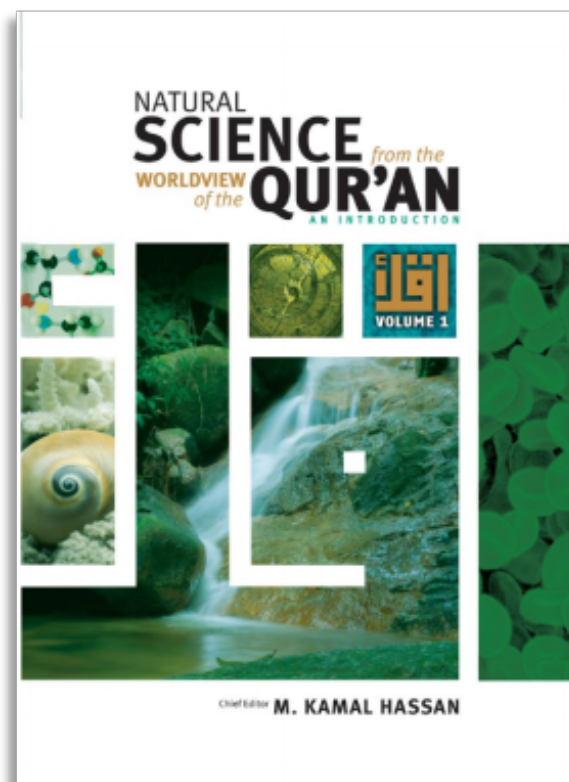
He insisted that the Muslim Ummah in Malaysia needs to be endowed with **honour and power** (*al-‘izzah*) from Allah ﷻ, to produce **a new breed of God-fearing leaders** of integrity and professional competency. The issue of **Ummatic unity** as commanded by Allah ﷻ (Q. 3:103), is also very pressing, failing which the Ummah will collapse (Q. 8:46; 4:59; 3:76). **The ecological emergency** resulting from corruption of the *qalb* in lieu of the rupture between human and The Creator-Sustainer from the spiritual and moral dimension of true sustainability must be addressed, apart from the need to define “**Civilisational Collapse**” from Islamic perspective. IIUM must **Lead the Way** in charting a path towards a brighter, and more ideal future of the Muslim Ummah of Malaysia, driven by our believe in **all** promises of Allah ﷻ, with the condition that the Ummah fulfils its responsibilities and *amānah*.



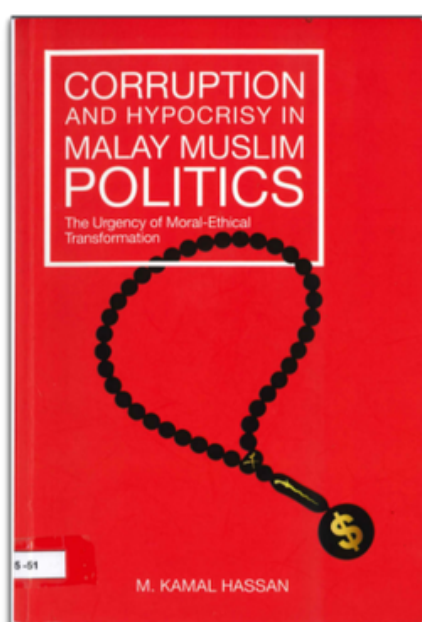
Among the eleven Main Key Drivers of his VISION for the *Ummah*'s Future in 2077 are "Transformation of Muslim-Malay Political Culture and Landscape, for an *Ummah* with Islamic Unity in a New Political Scenario". The period of 2050-2080 will see the advent of the Game Changers, i.e. "A New Breed of Islamic Leaders, who are God-fearing, competent, knowledgeable yet humble, tolerant, sincerely people-oriented, & with high integrity".⁷ These are very distinctive in *Salam Kasih* (2017).

Another main key driver is "Excellent Relationship and Harmonious Convivencia with Non- Muslim Communities",⁸ based on the three Sacred Missions of *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn*, *Amr Ma'rūf Nahy Munkar*, and *Shuhadā' 'alā al-Nās*, very much clearly spelt out in *Voice of Islamic Moderation from the Malay World* (2011).⁹

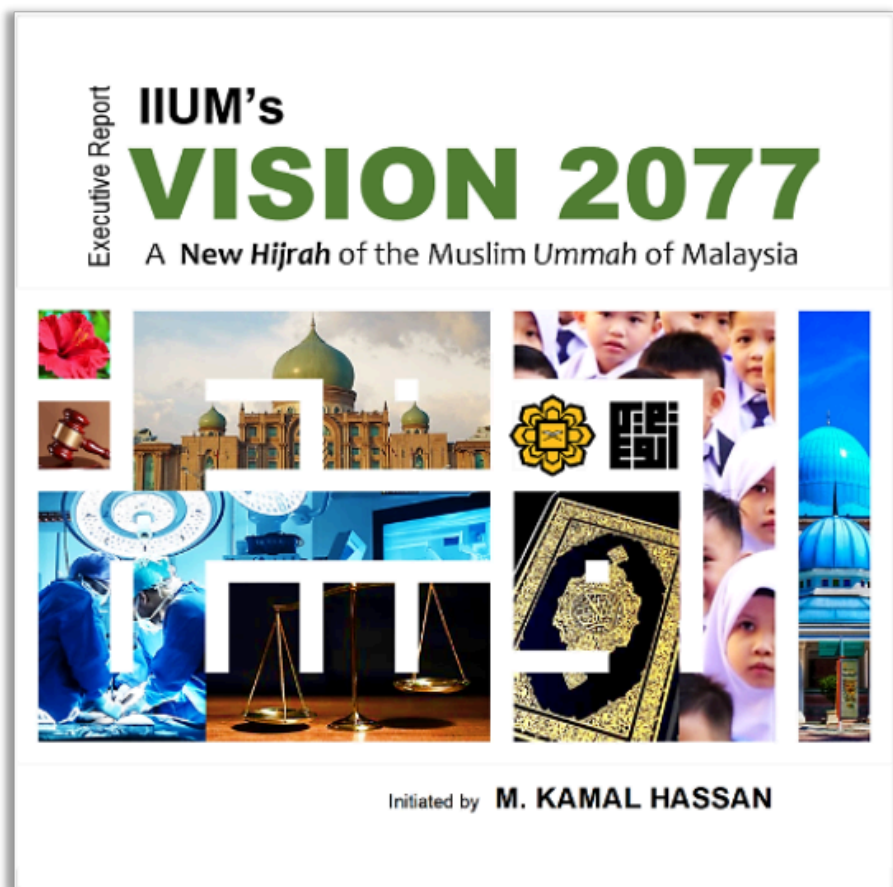
Other key drivers are “Success of Comprehensive Educational Transformation producing an Enlightened Ummah with very praiseworthy educational outcomes”, “An Ummah with World Class ICT education and training, and expertise in advanced AI Technology”, “Islamicisation of Science and Technology - A Highly Respected Aspect of Contemporary Islamic Civilisation and Academia in Southeast Asia”, and “Malaysian Muslim Architects, Planners and Environmental Designers are highly acclaimed in the World”.¹⁰ These are traceable with distinctively clarity in *Natural Science from the Worldview of the Qur'an* (2018), volumes 1, 2 and 3.¹¹



His books *Corruption and Hypocrisy in Malay Muslim Politics: The Urgency of Moral-Ethical Transformation* (2021) and the Malay version *Korupsi dan Kemunafikan dalam Politik Melayu: Perlunya disegerakan Transformasi Moral-Etika* (2022)¹² ring very closely with his VISION 2077 key drivers.



These are “New Strength and Solidarity with Transnational Network - An Ummah with stronger domestic and global presence, exerting bigger impact in the ASEAN Region”, “Good Governance, Competent Management in the Public and Private Sectors, and the Elevated Status of *Shari’ah* Courts and Laws on Par with Secular Civil Courts and Laws”.¹³ It is not surprising that such a visionary as Professor Emeritus Dr. M. Kamal Hassan (*Rahimahu’Llāh*) would also be concerned with matters of the Ummatic futures, and delving deep into the vastness of futures studies, before embarking on the pursuit of VISION 2077. In his words, indeed VISION 2077 is an immensely huge Islamisation project, visioning Malaysia as a viable model, an answer to contemporary crises for the whole world.



The cover of the upcoming book IIUM’s VISION 2077, A New Hijrah of the Muslim Ummah in Malaysia: Executive Report.

It is indeed refreshing and reassuring that Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar as the 7th Rector of IIUM, is steering IIUM closely on track with “*Tawhīdic Epistemology*”. His New Year address clearly spelt out the need “to restore and enhance the Islamic identity of IIUM, to elevate the international standing of IIUM as a leading university in the world with a clear role in the thought leadership”.

This, according to him, will “involve a review of the University curriculum in light of the Tawhidic epistemology”, with nurturing of “Tawhīdic and Ummatic minds” to give the needed effects on the curricular transformation. All these requiring an “expansion, advancement and flourishing of interdisciplinary studies”. We savour the goodnews when the Rector announced the establishment of “three new institutes and centres that are interdisciplinary in nature: Centre for Counter-Islamophobia and Global Engagement, Institute of International and Asean Studies, and Institute of Futures and Sustainability Studies”.¹⁴

May Allah ﷻ bless our beloved University with good fruition of the vision of our highly regarded forefather, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. M. Kamal Hassan (*Raḥimahu’Llāh*) being supported and carried through by our current Honourable Rector, Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar. May He fortify IIUM’s current Rector with His Divine Guidance and Assistance, in carrying out IIUM’s vision and missions in a renewed light, with new vigour and steam, *Āmīn!*

References:

1. Edited by the present author to standard written English from colloquial WhatsApp text.
 2. Edited by the present author to standard written English from colloquial WhatsApp text.
 3. This video is available at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jOUoMKHBQE>. International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Pakistan, in October 1999. Video-still captured on 15.1.2025 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jOUoMKHBQE>.
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 5. *Salam Kasih*, 2017: 38, 62.
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 7. M. Kamal Hassan, VISION 2077 Concept Paper, 2019, unpublished.
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