

**ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND ITS  
CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**  
**A Discourse on Selected Issues**

**THAMEEM USHAMA**

**IIUM PRESS**  
**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**



# **Islamic Thought and its Contemporary Relevance**

*[A Discourse on Selected Issues]*

Edited by

Thameem Ushama



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## FIVE

### **Spiritual Ethics and Character Building**

Fatimah Abdullah

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Without spiritual knowledge no moral excellence can be achieved. From an Islamic perspective, moral uplifting is attained from the Qur'ān and translated into practical guidance by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The *Sunnah* and *Sīrah* of the Prophet have always been the ideal model for character building. The Prophetic biography includes every detail of his life; it has been thoroughly recorded and authenticated in a manner that presents his personality as though he were alive amongst his followers. Muslims of every age, profession or family position can always find examples to follow from the life of the Prophet as the leader of a nation, as husband, as father, as an army general, a politician, a friend, a neighbor or any other integrated role of human existence. The spiritual dimension of Islam and its influence in developing a refined character was and is still preserved and instructed by committed Muslims in general and for the adherents of proper *Ṣūfī* orders in particular.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Controlling Emotions and Character Building**

To bring about any change in human character requires the comprehension of the nature of man and the psychology of human soul. Hence, the study of the inner dimensions of man and character building towards a balanced personality is necessary in order to attain the psycho-spiritual well being of individuals and society. A very famous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet states that the Prophet has only been sent as a messenger to perfect and complete the multifaceted aspects of good character. One of the great scholars of the twentieth century is Abul A'ālā Mawdūdī who clearly differentiated between the human moral and ethical values that are universally accepted and those

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Sharī'ah: A Study of Shaykh Sirhindī's Efforts to Reform Sufism* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), pp. 61-99.