

# Spirituality and Sustainability

EXPERIENCES OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL  
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Edited by  
Abdul Rashid Moten

With a foreword by Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak,  
Rector, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)



IIUM



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IIUM  
Press



KUALA LUMPUR 2020  
World Book Capital

Gombak • 2020

First Print, 2020  
© IIUM Press, IIUM

IIUM Press is a member of the Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia - MAPIM  
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)  
Persatuan Penerbit Buku Malaysia - MABOPA  
(Malaysian Book Publishers Association)  
No. of Member - 201905

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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

SPIRITUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY : EXPERIENCES OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA / Edited

by: Abdul Rashid Moten  
ISBN 978-967-491-048-8

1. Sustainable development--Religious aspects--Islam.
  2. Maqasid (Islamic law).
  3. Education, Higher--Activity programs--Malaysia.
  4. Government publications--Malaysia.
- I. Abdul Rashid Moten.  
338.927088297.

*Published in Malaysia by*  
IIUM Press  
International Islamic University Malaysia  
P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur

*Printed in Malaysia by*  
Reka Cetak Sdn. Bhd.  
No. 12 & 14, Jalan Jemuju Empat 16/13D  
Seksyen 16, 40200 Shah Alam  
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

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CHAPTER 17

**Holistic Education  
for Sustainable  
Development:  
Concluding Observations**

M. Kamal Hassan &  
Nur Jannah Hassan

Spirituality, from an Islamic perspective, has been and is being manifested in the holistic education that the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) provides. As the first faith-based university in Malaysia, the IIUM's philosophy, vision, mission and objectives are constructed according to the worldview of Islam which addresses the spiritual as well as the mundane needs of mankind. It was conceived to be a new post-colonial model of higher education to train future leaders of the Muslim world as integrated and balanced personalities to serve as positive agents of social and civilisational transformation.

The IIUM's philosophy of knowledge emphasises the need for human beings to know and believe that Allāh (SWT) is the Creator, Master and Sustainer of the universe and that human beings are His servants and vicegerents (*khalīfah*) who are endowed with, and are instructed to use, reason (*'aql*) properly as a divine trust (*amānah*) for the development of human knowledge and civilisation. By making the five verses of *Sūrah al-'alaq* (Al-Qur'ān, 96: 1-5) the philosophical and spiritual basis of the university, staff and students of the IIUM are introduced to the divine commandment that knowledge has to be sought, utilised and constructed within the frame of reference of faith, guidance and Will of Allāh (SWT). Verses 96:6-7 of the same surah remind the university community that humans tend to transgress the limits of their freedom given by God. They forget that they will be made accountable to Him for all their misdeeds and misconducts (Al-Qur'ān, 96: 5-8). These and other verses read together reinforce the spirituality of human existence and purpose on earth.

Likewise, the Constitution of the IIUM proclaims the aim of the university to become a leading international centre of excellence in education, research and innovation, and thus to restore the dynamic and progressive role of the ummah in all branches of knowledge. The Constitution was inspired by the worldview of *tawhīd* as well as its concept of holistic education, which together uphold the spiritual value of higher education. Similarly, the seven mission statements



in the Constitution reflect the Islamic spiritual basis, identity and orientation of the IIUM. As per the mission statements, IIUM is “to serve as agents of comprehensive and balanced progress” as well as sustainable development; to nurture the quality of holistic excellence imbued with Islamic moral-spiritual values; and to exemplify an international community of scholars, officers and staff motivated by the Islamic worldview and code of ethics as an integral part of their work culture. The sixth and seventh mission statements, of enhancing “intercultural understanding and foster civilisational dialogues” and of developing an environment which instils commitment for lifelong learning and a deep sense of social responsibility, refer to the social manifestations of *īmān* as required by Islamic theology and ethics.

The Constitution also laid down the objectives of the university to pursue knowledge in all fields following the religious and civilisational mission of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) as well as with the pioneering works of early Islamic scholars and thinkers, all of whom based their scholarly works on the foundation of *īmān* in Allāh (SWT). One of the objectives spelled out clearly is that all aspects of academic work and activities would be carried out “by infusing Islamic values and principles in their broadest sense.”

The centrality and foundationality of Divine Revelation can also be seen in the IIUM logo with an open Qur’ān at the centre (Figure 17.1). The recognition of this fact is actualised in the act of worshipping God (symbolised as a black square surrounding the open Qur’ān) – as a pure spiritual act of the servant and making His Book, Guidance and Wisdom the basis of the human quest and construction of knowledge, upon which the sound development of a

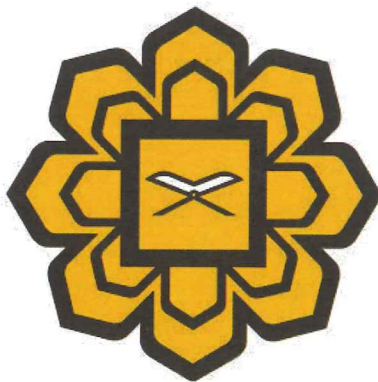


Figure 17.1: The IIUM Logo.

holistic faith-based civilisation takes place. In short, all development efforts undertaken by human beings should be based upon knowledge and wisdom, which are imbued with *īmān* and submission to Allāh (SWT) as enjoined in His final revelation, al-Qur'ān.

### **The Core Values**

It is instructive to look at the university's code of ethics which is very comprehensive and covers the ethical behaviour and conduct of administrative and academic staff members as well as students. The codes are supplemented by separate disciplinary rules governing staff as well as students. Both the codes, and the staff and student disciplinary rules were formulated in accordance with Islamic spiritual-ethical principles, values and norms as well as those standard government rules, regulations and laws applicable to all the public universities in Malaysia. With regard to the Core Values in the codes, the value of Integrity is chosen as the essence of the university's Code of Ethics. Integrity is defined as the quality of being perfect and excellent in terms of one's service to Allāh and society, and one's treatment of the natural environment." It signifies a state of attaining a holistic personality with the highest spiritual intellectual and moral virtues.

It is significant that the Code declares that the IIUM community shall attain integrity "individually and collectively to promote and establish an exemplary community" that "always enjoin good and forbids evil". Article 2.5.1. of the Codes states: "Staff members are to work for the purpose of gaining the pleasure of Allāh as the ultimate goal", while under the value of Justice [*'adālah*], it states that "decisions, actions and resolutions made must be for the benefit of the University and not in favour of any individual or group." It also promotes the values of impartiality, transparency and "Justice in Thought and Action" avoiding favouritism, nepotism, cronyism, injustice and oppression.

### **The IIUM Students' Disciplinary Rules 2004**

This 125-page legal document specifies the rules and regulations pertaining to students' discipline on campus, which prohibits them from acts, conduct, behaviour or activities which are forbidden by Islamic law and ethics as well as the standard disciplinary rules of all public universities in Malaysia. The prohibitions include plagiarism, unlawful assemblies, gaming, wagering, betting, possession or exhibition of obscene, pornographic materials or articles, possession or abuse of dangerous drugs, liqueurs or intoxicating substances, smoking, immoral interactions between opposite genders or same gender and

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# Spirituality and Sustainability

EXPERIENCES OF

THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

The International Islamic University Malaysia has, since 2018, redoubled its struggle to restore its wisdom, strengths, and dignity and promote comprehensive excellence. Hence, the University adopted the United Nations' sustainable development agenda as a complement to the University's vision and mission of Islamisation, Integration, Internationalisation and Comprehensive Excellence.

The book explains the ways in which the SDGs will provide a new strategy to apply the concept of Islamisation, which has long been the foundation of the IIUM. Consequently, the university's operations and facilities have been adjusted so that they become mediums in applying and showcasing a lifestyle that is sustainable. Everything in the university i.e. the curricular and extra-curricular courses, the research activities, and everyday operations in administrative offices and other places are geared towards sustainable development in line with the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Elements of sustainability are integrated in every aspect of the university's administration and, indeed, in teaching, research and community engagement. Consequently, the IIUM has adopted "Humanising Higher Education through maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and SDGs" as its official strategic mission.

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ISBN: 978-967-491-048-8



0 780674 010488

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