PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVE

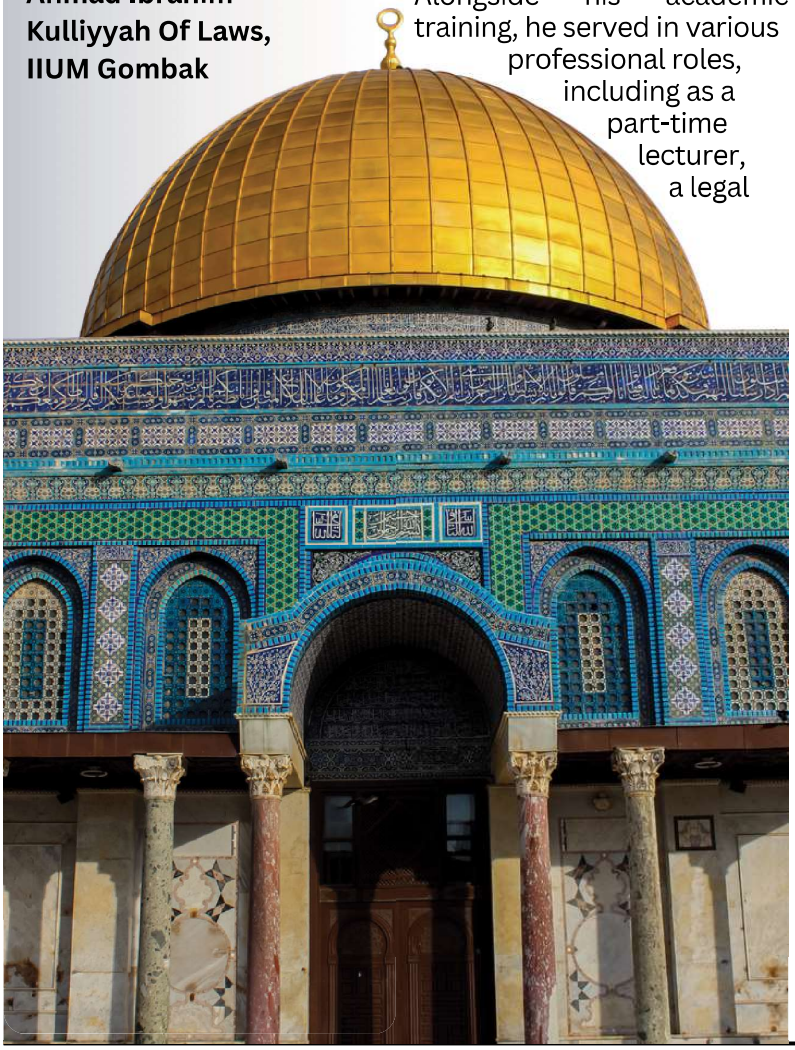


Dr. Mohammed Rafiq Moumen Elshobake
Assistant Professor, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyyah Of Laws, IIUM Gombak

From Gaza to Kuala Lumpur, Dr. Mohammad Rafiq Moumen Elshobake's academic journey reflects a deep commitment to Islamic legal scholarship and higher education.

He began his early education in Palestine at Waqfa School before pursuing a dual degree in Sharia and Law (LLB and LLB Sharia) at the Islamic University of Gaza, an institution that was later completely destroyed due to the war. He then completed his Master's degree in Public Law, comparatively with Islamic Law, at the same university

Alongside his academic training, he served in various professional roles, including as a part-time lecturer, a legal counsellor, and an Imam and Khatib under the Ministry of Al-Waqf and Islamic Affairs, where he also taught the Quran.



In 2016, he travelled to Malaysia to further his studies and earned his PhD from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), specifically at the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyyah of Laws. He was recognised as the Best Graduate Student in 2019 and subsequently completed a post-doctoral fellowship with the Research Management Centre (RMC) and Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyyah of Laws.

Appointed as an Assistant Professor in 2021, he currently teaches Islamic Law, Civil Law, and International Law. He is also actively involved in postgraduate supervision for Master's and PhD students in Comparative Law and serves as a postgraduate coordinator, contributing to academic development and research supervision within the faculty.

What does the word Ummatic mean to you personally?

"Ummatic is a very important term. Ummatic is derived from the Arabic word ummah, which means community. But in this context, we are talking about a unified Muslim community. To be ummatic means to be unified, to be strong and to be united. This is very important.

Number one, to be unified means we have to transcend our differences. We must put aside differences in nationality, madhab, sect, race and other matters. Because Allah S.W.T. looks at us based on our deeds, our works and our hearts, not based on colour, race, nationality, wealth or position. Our value is based on taqwa.

Number two, to be strong means we stand together on Islamic ground. We cooperate in righteousness and piety, not in sin and wrongdoing. Strength comes when the ummah is united upon good principles.

Number three, to be united means to be together as one community. We can see this clearly when the Prophet S.A.W. migrated from Mecca to Medina and established the first state in Medina. He introduced what we call the Constitution of Medina. In that charter, he made the Muslims one ummah, and even included non-Muslims from Ahlul Kitab within a united community framework.

If unity could be established in such a diverse society, then it is even more important for Muslims today to be united among themselves. So, ummatic means being unified beyond differences, strong upon Islamic principles, and truly united as one community."



In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge the Ummah is currently facing at the global level?

"Okay, about the challenges of the global Ummah today, we have too many challenges. For example, look at Palestine. The Muslim Ummah is not united to stop the oppression, to stop the injustice, to stop the war. We have too many problems.

The first challenge is ideological. Now, we have many groups in the Ummah (Sunni, Shia, Salafi, Sufi). Too many different backgrounds. And the problem is, when all these groups look at others like they are not part of them, it creates mistrust, it creates conflict, and it stops the effort towards unity. This is why sometimes we have problems when we look at ideology.



The second challenge is political. Politics is mixed with many things. It is okay to have different parties, but if they are not united, if they are not looking for the same purpose, it becomes a problem. Difference is normal, Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala made us different. But the question is, how can we manage our differences without creating deep divisions?

The third challenge is economic and development differences. Some countries are strong, some are dependent, some very developed, some behind. Some still struggle with poverty, hunger, and basic needs. These differences make it hard for the Ummah to move forward together. Also, Islamophobia is a challenge. Some groups try to show Islam as dangerous, spreading wrong images, wrong concepts of Islam. This affects the Ummah's unity.

And finally, the main challenge, for me, is why Muslims, especially leaders, reject applying the concept of Ummatic. We talk about leading the way Ummatic, but in reality, many Muslim countries do not apply it."



A post-interview photo of Dr. Mohammed Rafiq Moumen Elshobake with Br. Adam Kharezmie

Sometimes people may have different interests, or they just want to live their life. Look at Palestine, every day more than 100 are shaheed, and many people are even unwilling to see the news. So, where is the concept of Ummatic?"

What role can IIUM students and Muslim youth play in contributing to the rise of the Ummah?

"Okay, the role of youth is very important. Prophet SAW mentioned that Allah S.W.T. sent victory through the youth. Even if young Muslims feel they cannot change much, this generation will be the leaders of the future.

At IIUM, you can engage in community projects like sustainable development programs, Usrah-in-Action, and co-curricular activities. These programs are very important because they allow you to apply the concept of Ummah, improve your skills, and contribute beyond just gaining knowledge. You also have to participate in leadership and character-building programs. This will give you the strength to carry responsibilities in the future and to fulfill your amanah properly.

Even if you are not studying Sharia or law, you should promote your Islamic knowledge, understand Akhlaq, and learn the principles of Islamic law. At the very least, you have to worship Allah S.W.T., read the Quran, memorize parts of it if possible and study Hadith. This will give you wisdom and ideas grounded in Islamic principles. When you carry amanah, you will be honest and responsible, fearing Allah S.W.T., regardless of whether anyone is watching.

You should also be involved in organizations and NGOs, contributing to your community, city, and country. Cooperation and unity are very important. Keep seeking knowledge in any field, stay close to Allah S.W.T. through worship, and maintain discipline.

Remember khair: be a khalifa, fulfill your amanah, seek knowledge through iqra', and be rahmah lil alameen. Even small actions, combined with the contributions of others, will create a big impact.

Finally, you should set a good example and become a da'i, guiding others from darkness to light. By doing this, you contribute to the rise and unity of the Ummah. Even small contributions now can grow into bigger impacts in the global Muslim community."

"Keep seeking knowledge in any field, stay close to Allah S.W.T. through worship, and maintain discipline."