



INTERNATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

# INSIGHTS

MAGAZINE



## PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH AN ISLAMIC LENS



### INSIDE

**9th convocation**  
ceremony - offline  
& online

**IOU Master's**  
**degrees** earn  
NAQAA seal of  
approval

Photography,  
Qur'an recitation  
competition  
**winners**

& much more...

THERE'S A WHOLE LOT IN "STORE"  
FOR YOU AT THE

# IOU STORE

- Custom quote T-shirts
- Inspirational coffee mugs
- Motivational tote bags
- Designer gift items & more



Insights is a bi-annual magazine that features International Open University's progress and development. The magazine presents the achievements of all the departments and highlights the new programs that were launched, while sharing valuable experiences from students and alumni. It is a testimonial to the talents and efforts of all the students and faculties who fueled IOU's successes.



## MEET THE TEAM

Publisher	: International Open University Alumni Association (IAA)
Editor-in-Chief	: Prof. Dr. Bilal Philips
Marketing Director	: Yousuf Philips
Managing Editor	: Zahra Fathima
Designs & Layout	: Fathima Bint Aboobacker
Editors	: Abdur Rahman Fayyaz G. Adilah Shabazz Aishah Ahmed Amina M Ashraf Aymaan Hussain Ayoola Wahab DhoonNoorayn Durojaye Farielle Ahamed Maria F. Khan Rawnak Mahajabin Tasnia Rushda Fathima Khan Siddiqah Philips

Copyright 2023 by IOU Insights. All rights reserved. This publication may contain information which is copyrighted by others. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the prior written permission of the copyright holder. IOU Insights reserves the right to reject any advertisement. Readers should verify the information directly with advertisers. Writers' opinions are not necessarily those of IOU Insights.

## EDITOR'S DESK

## FAITH & RESILIENCE:

### *Insights for the Global Muslim Community*

In an age where conflicts are increasingly prevalent, we cannot overlook the impact on the mental health of the global Muslim community, the Ummah. Personal disputes, political tensions, and even spiritual battles can set off a chain of mental health problems.

As the Quran wisely states, "Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease" (Surah Ash-Sharh (94):6), the International Open University (IOU) strives to play a vital role in facilitating the provision of this ease during hard times.

We can find a clear reference to the psychological effects of conflict in the Quranic story of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) and his mother. As Allah mentions, "And the heart of Moses' mother became empty [of all else]. She was about to disclose [the matter concerning] him had We not bound fast her heart that she would be of the believers" (Surah Al-Qasas (28):10).

Musa's mother faced significant emotional and psychological strain due to their separation. However, Allah, in His boundless wisdom, strengthened her heart, providing her comfort and steadfastness in faith. This story reaffirms that Allah recognizes our psychological battles and the importance of addressing mental health, highlighting the need for counseling from an Islamic perspective.



Research shows that religion plays a key role in fostering hope and resilience, especially in conflict situations. The Islamic faith, with its spiritual wisdom and divine guidance, offers a solid foundation for improving mental health. "And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah]" (Surah Al-Baqarah (2):45).

This verse emphasizes the importance of seeking solace and strength through patience and prayer. Incorporating these religious principles into psychology not only provides comfort but also a powerful means for people to cope with psychological distress caused by the difficulties we face daily.

The IOU's Islamic approach to psychology reflects this combination of faith and science. Its programs aim to equip Muslim professionals with the understanding and skills to address the psychological impact of our struggles. By doing so, they will be able to provide support and comfort to those in need, strengthening the unity and resilience of the Ummah.

The journey through this time and age is tough, filled with trials that can challenge our faith and mental strength. Yet, as the IOU continues to lead by offering an Islamic perspective of psychology, it reminds us that we are not alone in our struggles. Just as Allah strengthened the heart of Musa's mother during her hardship, He provides us with the wisdom and resources to understand and

manage our psychological battles. This divine wisdom, together with the IOU's commitment to Islamic Psychology, offer a glimmer of hope to the Ummah, helping us not only to survive our trials but to come out stronger, In sha Allah.

May Allah guide the IOU and the Ummah in these noble efforts, offering comfort and solace to all those in need.



**By María F. Khan**

María F. Khan is a conflict analyst based in Germany, with a focus on East Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. She has a Master's in Conflictology from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) along with a Master's in Creative Writing. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Security and Defence at the European University of Madrid and a diploma in Islamic studies from IOU. Her work has appeared in international and Spanish media outlets like El Confidencial, El Mundo, La Razón & VICE News.

FROM **THE DEPUTY**  
**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S DESK**



## The Unfolding of a Success Story

The International Open University, widely known as IOU, has experienced remarkable growth since its establishment as an educational institution in 2007. Following its official recognition as a university of higher education in 2010, IOU has undergone significant evolution in various domains.

Founded by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, a world-renowned Islamic scholar and public figure, its aim was to provide Islamized education to knowledge seekers globally, from the comfort of their homes. Previously known as the Islamic Online University, the institution remains dedicated to benefiting humanity by making high-quality education accessible, available, and affordable, with the noble goal of transforming societies through education.

Entering the higher education sector with its flagship Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies (BAIS), the IOU has since added a diverse array of accredited degree programs and disciplines to its roster, including contemporary subjects such as Psychology, Business Administration, Economics, Education, Arabic Language and Linguistics, and Information Technology. The one feature that makes

IOU stand out is its integration of Islamic values into its curricula.

The success story of IOU can be largely attributed to its dedicated and highly qualified staff members from all over the globe, who tirelessly work around the clock to provide students with the best learning experience. The impact of this success is reflected in the diversity of our student body, particularly from countries that previously had limited access to formal education that benefits its students both in the *dunya* (worldly life) and the *akhirah* (hereafter). It is a blessing and a privilege to be a part of IOU's journey, and see it grow and prosper under the guidance of its founder and the hardworking family of its staff members.

*Muhammad Ahsan*

**Professor Dr. Muhammad Ahsan (FRSA)**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academics,  
International Open University




# Contents

1

Psychology through an Islamic Lens

Page 1



2

Headquarter's Highlights

Page 11



3

IOU in Focus


Page 16



EXCLUSIVE

A Captivating Da'wah Adventure in the Sacred Land!

Page 8



4

Events

Page 23



5

Alumni Spotlight

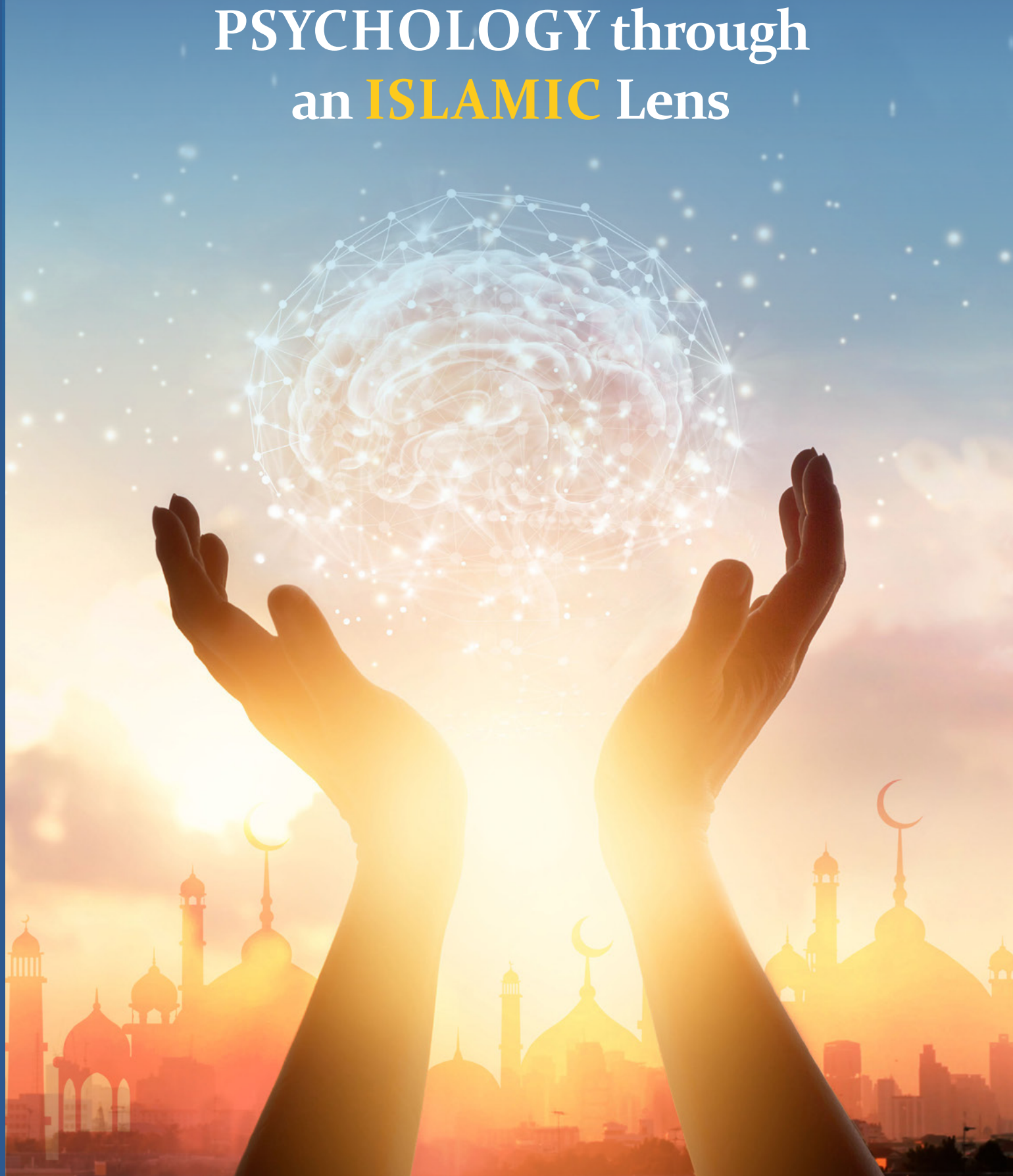
Page 32



6

Global Collaborations

Page 34



## PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH AN ISLAMIC LENS

# IOU's B.Sc. Psychology Program

## Unveiling the Islamic Approach to Psychology



In today's ever-evolving world, the realm of psychology has become an intricate tapestry of challenges and perplexities. With the rise of postmodernity, the notion of "anything goes" has woven a web of uncertainty, leaving the average person grappling with the nuances of distinguishing right from wrong.



### Comprehensive Understanding through an Islamic Lens

This is where the International Open University (IOU) steps in to offer a solution. With its Islamically-integrated Psychology program, IOU not only enables students to gain a comprehensive understanding of psychology but also empowers them to examine secular psychology through the lens of the Quran and Sunnah, and provides them with a strong foundation to grasp the fundamentals of psychology from an Islamic perspective.



### Equipping Students for Modern Challenges

Amidst the many contemporary challenges posed in the field of Psychology, IOU's program stands resolute in meeting such challenges while guided by Islamic principles. The program is meticulously crafted to endow students with essential theoretical knowledge and practical skills to comprehend human behavior and mental processes. The program encompasses a wide array of courses from developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and psychology of communication, to abnormal psychology.



### Homage to the Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars

IOU's program distinguishes itself by honoring the profoundly significant contributions of early Muslim scholars in the field of Psychology. The course "History and Philosophy of Psychology" sheds light on towering Muslim figures whose groundbreaking insights laid the foundation for modern-day psychologists. Regrettably, their invaluable contributions to the field have largely been overlooked by the modern world.



### Integrating Islamic Principles into Therapy

In the secular domain of psychology, the therapeutic setting often restricts the inclusion of God in the treatment process. However, through IOU's Islamic counseling course, individuals have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of Islamic counseling techniques. In this framework, human beings are perceived as dependent creatures relying on God for their healing and guidance. Moreover, the curriculum seamlessly integrates Islamic principles into contemporary therapeutic models, which enhances the effectiveness of treatment, especially when counselors work with Muslim clients.



### Insight into Child Psychology for Effective Parenting

The task of raising children today has become increasingly arduous and demanding. The study of the fields of Psychology of Adolescence and Child Psychology offers invaluable insights into the behavior and emotions of children and adolescents. This allows practitioners to develop a deeper understanding of how to forge stronger connections between parents and children/adolescents, how to develop meaningful relationships, and how to navigate the intricate challenges of parenting with heightened awareness and knowledge.



### Empowering Students with Research

In academia, making substantial progress is impossible without engaging in research. Our Research Methodology course equips students with the essential skills required to conduct rigorous academic research in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association.



### Flexibility and Accessibility through Online Learning

With all our courses conducted online, this allows a learning experience that combines flexibility and accessibility. Students have the freedom to access courses from anywhere in the world, enabling them to pursue their studies at their own pace. This convenience of learning from the comfort of their homes proves especially beneficial for individuals juggling full-time employment, parenthood, or other commitments that make attending physical institutions impractical.



### Catering to Diverse Learning Preferences

IOU's programs embrace a diverse range of learning preferences. We recognize that individuals have unique ways of acquiring knowledge. For auditory learners who thrive by listening, we offer engaging audio lectures tailored to their needs. Visual learners, on the other hand, benefit from our comprehensive collection of video lectures and PowerPoint presentations. In essence, our program employs a blended approach, leveraging a variety of audiovisual aids such as lectures, reading materials, and assignments, ensuring an enriched learning experience for all students.



### Engaging Supportive Community and Academic Excellence

Each course is led by accomplished and proficient instructors. Access to these teachers via email and call (during office hours) gives students an opportunity to dissipate any confusion or doubts regarding any given topic. In our top-notch Learning Management System (LMS) platform, students can interact not only with their teachers but also with their fellow classmates. This fosters a sense of community and prevents students from falling into the trap of loneliness while studying online. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive a B.Sc. degree, an Associate of Science in Psychology (APSY) degree, or Certificate in Psychology (CPSY). This achievement paves the way for further exploration and advancement in specialized areas of Psychology, which enables students to pursue advanced learning and training opportunities.

**Enroll Now!**

[www.iou.edu.gm/stream/psy](http://www.iou.edu.gm/stream/psy)



# AL-BALKHI:

## A Pioneer of Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic Medicine

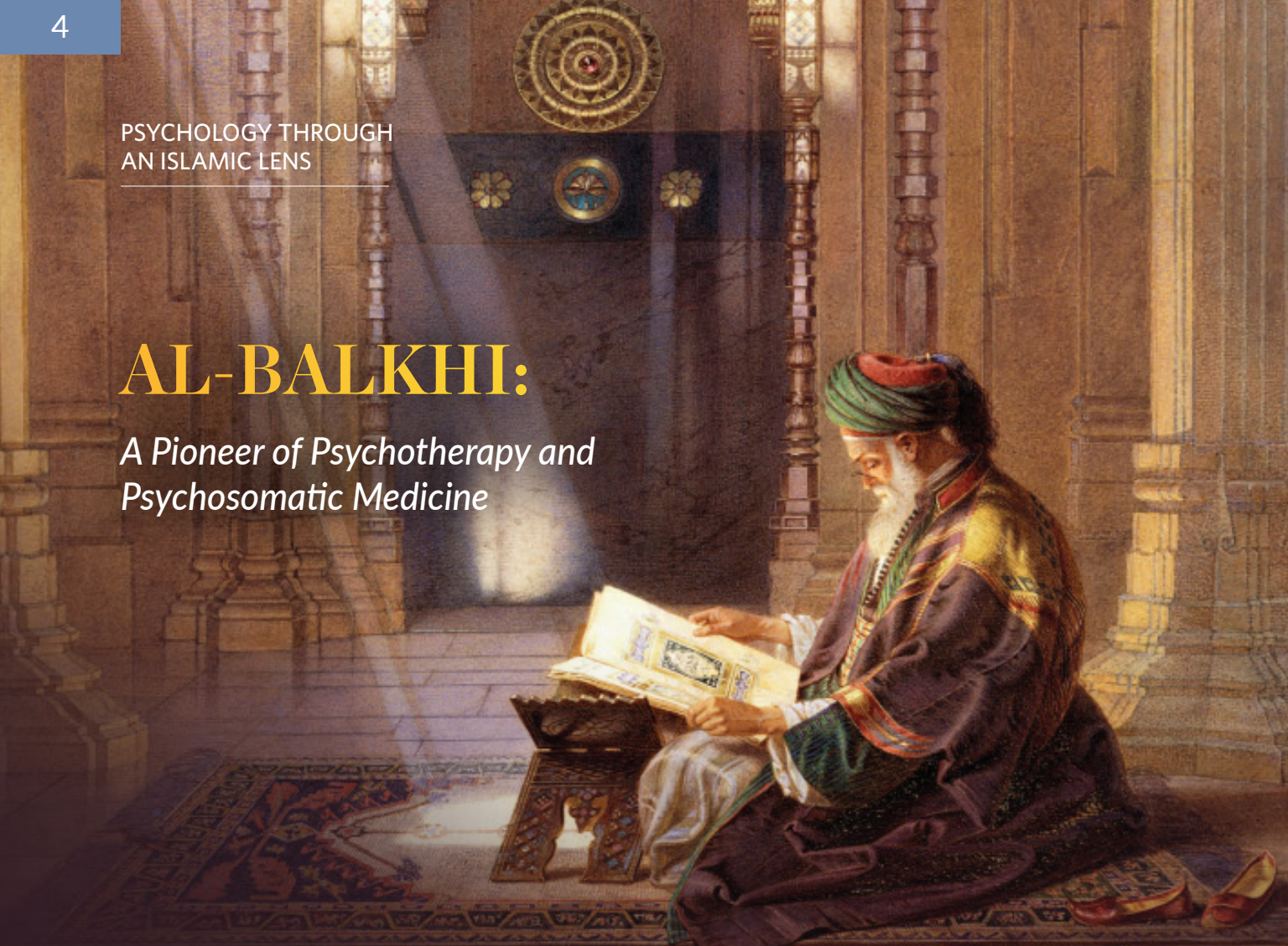


Image Source: The International Institute of Islamic Thought

It was the 9th century, and the world was still struggling to understand bodily diseases. Meanwhile, Persian Polymath, Abu Zayd Al-Balkhi (850 CE - 934 CE) was far ahead of his time, perceiving and comprehending a phenomenon that others could not. Excelling in philosophy, geography, mathematics, medicine, and many other disciplines, his work stands as a testament to the enduring impact of early Islamic scholars in the field of psychology and their significant contributions to our understanding of the human mind and well-being.

### Revival of Al-Balkhi's Work

Dr. Malik Badri (16 February 1932 – 8 February 2021), known as the father of Islamic Psychology, deserves credit for reviving Al-Balkhi's work. While the modern world largely ignored the contributions of early Muslims to the field now known as "Psychology" (Ilm an-Nafs), it was through the efforts of scholars like Dr. Malik Badri that the work of Muslim scholars survived.

### Contribution to Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

While the entire work of al-Balkhi has breadth and depth that very few in the field can comprehend, one of his contributions that stands out is his understanding of what resembles modern-day obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). In an article titled "Obsessional Disorders in al-Balkhi's 9th-century Treatise: Sustenance of the Body and Soul", the writers explore the historical perception of psychological suffering and mental illnesses, with a particular emphasis on OCD. While it is commonly believed that Robert Burton reported the first case of OCD in "The Anatomy of Melancholy" (1621), it was not until the 19th century that the modern conceptualization of OCD was presented. However, al-Balkhi was the perceptive intellectual who discussed the origin and explanation of various psychopathologies in his book, originally written in Arabic in the 9th century, titled "Sustenance of the Body and Soul" (Masalih Al Abdan

wa al-Anfus). His observations align with today's understanding of OCD, as seen in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). Al-Balkhi's classifications included time-dependent and symptom-dependent categories of obsessions.

### Medieval Perceptions of Mental Health

During the medieval period, mental health disturbances were attributed to imbalances in bodily humors and temperaments. However, these assumptions and descriptions of mental illnesses lacked direction and were limited in structure and focus.

### Breakdown of Al-Balkhi's Outstanding Perspective

Abu Zayd al-Balkhi's contribution is distinct in terms of classification, description, and holistic approach to treatments. In his medical treatise, "Sustenance of the Body and Soul," he divided mental disorders into four main categories: anger (al-ghadab), sadness and depression (al-jaza'), fears and phobias (al-faza'), and obsessional disorders (wasawes al-sadr).

In this book, he dedicated an entire chapter to the discussion of these disorders. Al-Balkhi believed that affected individuals experienced distressing thoughts referred to as "annoying thoughts" or "afkar rade'ah", which were not based in reality. Furthermore, individuals with obsessive disorders would consistently recall these fearful thoughts over and over again, expecting them to materialize shortly. Such thoughts hindered their daily activities, routine tasks, and level of focus and concentration. These individuals would do their best to distract their minds from these intrusive thoughts but would soon find their efforts futile as the thoughts returned.

This was followed by al-Balkhi's extensive suggestions for the treatment of these disorders. His intervention for obsessional thoughts included two methods: external therapy and internal therapy.

External therapy encompasses any action outside of oneself, including but not limited to avoiding loneliness, engaging in meaningful activities, and enjoying good food and drink. This reflects al-Balkhi's holistic approach to treatment.

Al-Balkhi also advocated for internal therapy, which involved replacing obsessional thoughts with positive

*Al-Balkhi also advocated for internal therapy, which involved replacing obsessional thoughts with positive thoughts. This concept aligns with the modern-day approach of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)*

thoughts. This concept aligns with the modern-day approach of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). For example, individuals were encouraged to remind themselves that these thoughts were not based on reality. They were also advised to discuss such thoughts with a trusted friend (or a therapist nowadays) to help evaluate the validity of these thoughts. In contemporary psychology, internal therapy which was first proposed by al-Balkhi corresponds to insight therapy.

In conclusion, al-Balkhi's insightful comprehension of obsessional disorders and his recognition of the significance of psychological techniques as therapeutic tools laid the groundwork for the modern understanding of these disorders and the development of intervention models to treat them. His work not only expanded the scope of psychological insight and care during his time, but it ultimately contributed to the development of modern psychotherapy.



### By Bela Khan

Bela Khan is a senior lecturer of Psychology at IOU and a diplomate in Logotherapy. She is also an author of two books, a life coach, and a homeschooling mom. She holds a Master's in Psychology and numerous certificates in personal development, parenting, relationships, entrepreneurship, and leadership. Additionally, she holds diplomas in Quran, Tafseer, and Hadith.



## PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH AN ISLAMIC LENS

# Rising Victim Mentality & its Effect on Spiritual Well-Being



Suffering is an inherent part of the human experience. It is through the trials and tribulations of life that we often find ourselves on a journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth. However, in recent times, there has been a growing trend of individuals adopting a victim mentality, constantly portraying themselves as victims, seeking attention, sympathy, and validation from others. This mindset, known as victimhood, has detrimental effects on personal well-being and spiritual development.

To understand the distinction between genuine suffering and victimhood, it is essential to shed light on the characteristics of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). Individuals with NPD exhibit a range of traits that contribute to their self-centered attitude. They have an exaggerated sense of self-importance, a grandiose sense of themselves, a constant need for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others. These individuals often view themselves as superior to those around them and believe that they deserve special treatment and attention.

Genuine suffering arises from life's challenges, such as illness, loss, or hardship. It is a deeply personal and transformative experience that can lead to profound spiritual growth. Through genuine suffering, individuals develop resilience, compassion, and a greater appreciation for life's blessings. It is a process that requires self-reflection, personal accountability, and the willingness to face adversity head-on.

On the other hand, victimhood stems from a distorted perception of suffering. Individuals who adopt this mentality often exaggerate their hardships, blame others for their problems, and refuse to take responsibility for their actions. They seek validation and sympathy from others, using their victim status as a means to gain attention and control. This mindset perpetuates a cycle of negativity, hindering personal growth and straining relationships.

The story of Prophet Yunus (AS) serves as a profound example of the distinction between genuine suffering and victimhood. As narrated in the Quran, Prophet Yunus (AS) faced a challenging situation when he attempted to flee from his people and was subsequently swallowed by a whale. Inside the belly of the whale, he realized his mistake and turned to Allah in sincere repentance. His powerful dua (supplication) reflected humility, remorse, and a genuine desire for spiritual growth.

Prophet Yunus (AS) teaches us that genuine suffering can be a catalyst for spiritual awakening and personal transformation. Despite being in an extremely distressing situation, he did not adopt a victim mentality. Instead, he acknowledged his wrongdoing and took responsibility for his actions. Through his sincere repentance and reliance on Allah, he emerged from the whale's belly transformed and enlightened.

Incorporating the story of Prophet Yunus (AS) into our understanding of suffering and victimhood enables us to reflect on the importance of seeking genuine spiritual growth. It highlights the significance of personal accountability, humility, and reliance on a higher power (Allah) to overcome challenges. Prophet Yunus (AS) exemplified resilience, self-reflection, and a deep connection with Allah, setting an example for us to navigate through the negative effects of victimhood.

To overcome victimhood, individuals must engage in self-reflection and recognize their own role in creating their circumstances. They need to develop empathy and compassion for others, shifting their focus from self-centered grievances to genuine concern for the well-being of those around them. By letting go of the need for constant validation and attention, individuals can embark on a path of personal growth and meaningful relationships.

Genuine suffering and victimhood are two distinct phenomena with profound implications for spirituality. While genuine suffering can lead to personal transformation and spiritual growth, victimhood hinders progress and perpetuates

negative emotions. By understanding the characteristics of narcissistic personality disorder and incorporating the teachings of Prophet Yunus (AS), we can navigate through the challenges of life with humility, personal accountability, and a deep connection with Allah.

Through self-reflection and a genuine desire for growth, individuals can transcend victimhood and embrace a path of resilience, empathy, and meaningful spiritual development. By recognizing the distinction, one can cultivate a mindset of personal accountability and compassion, ultimately nurturing a healthier and more fulfilling spiritual journey.



**By Zulekha Shakoor  
Rajani**

Zulekha Shakoor Rajani, M.Sc (Psychology), PGDgC (Guidance and Counselling), KSet (Psychology), B.Ed (Education), is a qualified counselor and therapist, currently serving as a consultant psychologist. She heads the Indian chapter of International Students of Islamic Psychology (ISIP) and is pursuing a Diploma in Islamic Psychology from Cambridge Muslim College, UK. She is trained in Islamic and marital counselling, with a certification in tazkiyah therapy.



EXCLUSIVE

# A Captivating Da'wah Adventure in the Sacred Land!

*Journeying with Dr. Bilal Philips to Makkah and Madina:  
A Personal Chronicle*



► Dr. Bilal Philips with his son Omar Philips, grandson Hamza Philips, the founder of MVP, and some of the da'wah course students.



► Dr. Bilal Philips with scholars accompanying attendees

Get ready, readers! I'm about to share a memorable journey to Makkah and Madina. Our guide was Dr. Bilal Philips, the head of the International Open University. This trip, made possible through the grace of Almighty Allah, left enduring impressions on us all.

Picture this: Dr. Bilal Philips, the Chancellor of the International Open University, delivering a series of da'wah lectures in the peaceful city of Madina. The program included distinguished figures, such as Shaykh Assim Al-Hakeem, Shaykh Uthman Ibn Farooq, and sister Lauren Booth. The personal impact of this journey was profound for me as it was my first in-person meeting with our Chancellor. His humility and dedication to serving Islam and the ummah were palpable.

Together, we were on a mission to serve Allah, his teachings, and all Muslims. Our goal was to fulfill the IOU's mission: "Changing the nation through education." We aimed to make a significant impact and leave a lasting legacy for future generations. United in purpose, we seized this rare opportunity to contribute to the betterment of our ummah, using knowledge and faith as our tools.

The Da'wah Course program lasted two weeks. The students, who were mainly from the US, Canada, and the UK, along with some from Europe, learned about emulating our Prophet

Muhammed ﷺ and representing Islam faithfully.

Sami Preacher, the General Director of the Muslim Voice of Peace (MVP) and a converted Muslim, had a remarkable story to share: Ten years ago, he transitioned from being a highly respected American-Christian priest to a devout Muslim. Together with Issa Haj Hussein, the CEO of MVP, he organized this enlightening da'wah program.

The MVP team diligently designs these courses, intending to offer them every three months. They take place in sacred cities like Madina, Makkah, and Jerusalem. These places, known for their spiritual connections, serve as a backdrop for these transformative journeys.



► Sister Lauren Booth with attendees (on the right).





► President of the Middle East Center for Strategic and Legal Studies, former Saudi general and diplomat Dr. Anwar Majed Eshki, awarded Dr. Bilal Philips a certificate of appreciation.

Dr. Bilal's role in the program was central. His series of lectures on the importance of da'wah was enlightening, echoing the teachings from the Dawah Training Course Program (DTC) he previously taught in Qatar. He underscored the characteristics of the call (Islam), the caller (the Islamic propagator), and the called (non-muslims and Muslims invited to deepen their faith), highlighting da'wah as an obligation for every Muslim, according to their abilities.

The course aimed to equip young people with Islamic knowledge, guide them to become better Muslims, and enable them to invite non-Muslims to the light of Islam. After the course, the students received certificates, and a virtual group was created to keep everyone connected.

Upon concluding in Madina, Dr. Bilal embarked on a journey to Makkah. There, he continued

sharing his Islamic knowledge through casual discussions and responses to the answers from his students. Together with these students from the course, he had the chance to perform Umrah. His next destination was Jeddah. There, he met the IOU Student Committee from both Jeddah and Makkah. This eagerly awaited meeting, organized by Huma Khan, the chairperson of the Saudi student committee, along with Maimoona Begum, Shumaila Abdur Rasheed, Tuba Hassan, Kulsoom Hassan and Maryam Nazir, allowed the members to interact with Dr. Bilal personally.

Labeling this trip as merely beneficial would be a significant understatement. The journey resonated profoundly with me and altered my perspectives in ways I could not have foreseen. The age-old saying, "Traveling together unveils the reality of a person," held true for me on this trip. People I held in high

regard now command an even deeper level of respect and admiration. The journey has ended, but the memories will remain with me forever.



### By Eman Elsheikh

Eman Elsheikh is the personal assistant of the Chancellor of the International Open University (IOU), Dr. Bilal Philips. She is a graduate of Cairo University with a postgraduate diploma in translation and a former UNESCO employee. She is also a member of the International League of Islamic Literature and has published short stories and articles in various magazines.

# HEADQUARTER'S HIGHLIGHTS





## HEADQUARTER'S HIGHLIGHTS

# Celebrating Achievements IOU'S 2023 Convocation Gallery



► Governing Council members Khalifa Ceesay and Seedy Kanyi conferring the Professor Emeritus title to Dr. Bilal Philips



► Vice Chancellor Dr. Cherno Omar Barry awarding certificates to the students



► Mr. Babucarr Bouy, Minister of Public Service, The Gambia



► Chancellor Dr. Bilal Philips conferring degrees to the students





## HEADQUARTER'S HIGHLIGHTS



### Recognizing Excellence

## IOU Honors the Gambian President with a Doctorate Degree

The President of the Republic of the Gambia, Adama Barrow, was ceremoniously robed on Thursday, April 20, 2023, in the solemn setting of the State House. Presiding over the ceremony was Professor Cherno Omar Barry, the distinguished Vice-Chancellor of the International Open University.

Cast your mind back to the ninth IOU Convocation held on February 28, 2023, where President Adama Barrow was bestowed with an honorary Doctorate Degree, Honoris Causa, by the IOU. This exceptional recognition was an homage to his services in the realm of education, particularly his tireless efforts in decentralizing higher education and TVET. Although President Barrow was regrettably unable to grace the occasion in person, his presence

was represented by the Minister of Public Service, Babucarr Bouy.

The IOU extends its heartfelt acknowledgment to President Adama Barrow for his visionary policies, which have propelled the education sector in The Gambia to great heights. These transformative policies encompass a wide range of initiatives, from expanding access to secondary education and allocating a substantial budget dedicated to empowering marginalized students, especially those residing in rural areas of the nation.

Under President Barrow's stewardship, numerous initiatives have taken shape, most notably the launch of the National Islamic Education Strategy in July 2019.

This visionary strategy seeks to bestow equal and quality Quranic and Islamic education to every Gambian, irrespective of gender, social background, or income level. The overarching goal is to enhance the management of madrassas, nurture the skills of teachers and administrators, and ensure that every madrasa is equipped with the necessary resources, such as textbooks and other indispensable learning tools.

Embodying a pioneering spirit, the IOU stands tall as The Gambia's trailblazer, offering online education to its citizens and residents across the nation. President Barrow envisions granting access to top-tier higher education for every deserving Gambian, particularly those disadvantaged by circumstances. In line with this vision, the Founder-Chancellor of the IOU, Professor Dr. Bilal Philips, graciously extended a generous offering of one thousand scholarships, worth US\$ 4,000, for underprivileged youths in The Gambia. The conferral of the Doctor of Philosophy Honoris Causa by the IOU serves as a testament to President Barrow's unwavering commitment to education, heralding a new era of well-educated and highly skilled individuals who will contribute to a prosperous and progressive Gambia.

Following the robing ceremony, Professor Barry underscored the paramount importance of forging partnerships with the government, ensuring that every deserving Gambian has access to affordable, accessible, and flexible opportunities for post-secondary education. Professor Barry firmly believes that the IOU plays an indispensable role in fulfilling this noble objective.



## HEADQUARTER'S HIGHLIGHTS

## IOU Vice-Chancellor Meets the Gambian Vice-President



From left: Mam Nderry Touray (Admin Director), Sheikh Ndow (Deputy HR Manager), Ebou Gaye (Assistant Registrar), IOU Vice-Chancellor Dr. Cherno Omar Barry and the Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia, Muhammed E. Jallow.

A four-member delegation led by the Vice-Chancellor of the International Open University (IOU), Prof. Dr. Cherno Omar Barry, paid a courtesy call to the Vice-President of the Republic of The Gambia, Muhammed E Jallow, at the State House on April 12, 2023.

During the meeting, the delegation spoke about the role IOU plays in complementing the government's efforts in promoting education and making it affordable and accessible. Dr. Barry also enlightened the Vice-President about IOU's One Million Scholarship Project, aimed at helping Africans achieve academic excellence.

Dr. Barry expressed his gratitude to the Vice-President for the opportunities accorded to IOU, while the Vice-President assured the delegation continuous government support towards IOU's educational growth in the Gambia.

4<sup>th</sup>

# IOUCRIS 2023

(Conference on Research & Integrated Sciences)

THE GAMBIA

24<sup>TH</sup> OCT  
2023  
(Offline)

25<sup>TH</sup> OCT  
2023  
(Online)

### PAPER SUBMISSION

To submit your abstract or full paper, please visit:

<https://conference.iou.edu.gm/submission/>  
or email [conference-iou@iou.edu.gm](mailto:conference-iou@iou.edu.gm).

#### Guidelines

<https://jis.iou.edu.gm/information/authors>

#### Important Dates

Abstracts Paper Deadline:  
31<sup>st</sup> Aug 2023

Notification of Acceptance:  
10<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023

Full Paper Submission:  
20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023



# IOU IN FOCUS



## IOU IN FOCUS

### A Stamp of Excellence:

## IOU's New Master's Programs Earn NAQAA Seal of Approval

The International Open University continuously strives to increase the variety of programs while maintaining the same international quality standard it has been upholding since the beginning. This ensures that your education from home is not compromised in any respect.

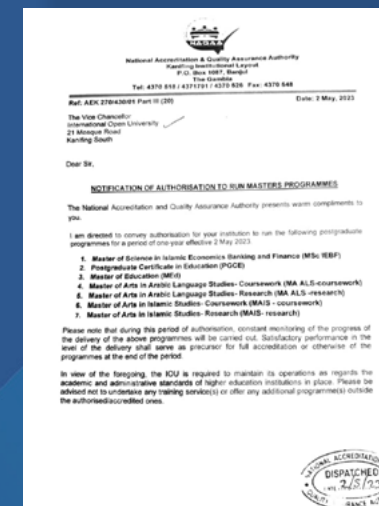
Behind the scenes, new courses and programs are always in different stages of their development. With a dedicated team of academic professionals working round the clock, the IOU was able to submit seven new Master's curriculum outlines to the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) in the Gambia. After reviewing the submissions, the NAQAA granted its approval for all of the programs. Alhamdulillah.

### The approved programs include:

- Master of Science in Islamic Economics, Banking and Finance (MSc IEBF)
- Master of Education (MEd)
- Master of Arts in Arabic Language Studies - Coursework (MA ALS Coursework)
- Master of Arts in Arabic Language Studies - Research (MA ALS Research)
- Master of Arts in Islamic Studies - Coursework (MAIS Coursework)
- Master of Arts in Islamic Studies - Research (MAIS Research)
- Masters in Business Administration - Research (MBA Research)

This delightful news comes at a time when the demand for more innovative educational programs is at its peak. The IOU already has all hands on deck to launch these approved programs over the course of the next few years with the first two programs coming to your computer screens as early as Fall 2023.

Students joining these programs will have exclusive access to world-class education all in line with new trends and emerging research catered to nourish their minds and shape them to become excellent academics and researchers of the future.



The academic department continuously strives to uphold its excellence under the supervision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academics, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ahsan, by bringing new programs to the vast roster of IOU's existing options.

The IOU hopes to continue providing its students with high-quality education at an affordable price to excel in academics and research. IOU aims to put its graduates on the map for better career prospects and success on their path to changing nations through education.



### By Yasmin Toor

Yasmin Toor is the Project Coordinator at IOU, where she has been working since 2018. She holds a Bridge Diploma in Islamic Studies and an MA in Islamic Studies from the IOU and an MPhil in Botany from the University of Gujrat. She is an independent academic trainer and a devoted mother and homemaker.



## IOU IN FOCUS

### Unlock Your Potential:

# Free Counseling Services for Academic Success

**Are you finding it difficult to manage your academic workload?**

**Do you desire to enhance your method of studying?**

**Are you in need of assistance with organizing your semester?**

The International Open University offers free counseling services to students facing emotional issues, personal problems, or academic concerns that may hinder their studies. In addition to providing individual counseling, the department also manages separate Telegram groups for working students, homemaker students, and older students. Furthermore, interactive webinars are conducted to address the specific needs of the students.



### Extending a Helping Hand

Based on the principle of the importance of extending a helping hand, IOU has prioritized addressing the needs of all its students by offering various tools that will be beneficial to them. The student counseling department was established in 2019 to support students with their academic, remedial, and developmental requirements. Creating a secure and supportive environment for students to discuss their academic concerns and personal issues is an essential aspect of IOU's student support services.

'Abdullah bin 'Umar narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection; and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection." (Sahih Bukhari)

IOU has made this prophetic guidance an important principle in all its endeavors and has striven to support its students through various means while recognizing their potential achievements by following this prophetic guidance.



### Our Goals

Our primary goals revolve around supporting students in various aspects. One aim is to help students build resilience, and equip them with the necessary tools to overcome challenges and bounce back from setbacks. Additionally, we strive to enhance students' coping abilities by providing them with strategies and resources to manage stress and effectively navigate academic demands. We are dedicated to promoting students' general well-being throughout the academic year by fostering a positive and nurturing environment that contributes to their overall happiness and success.



### Benefits that Await

IOU's student counseling services provide a secure and supportive environment for students to address their concerns and to receive expert assistance. This is particularly beneficial for students juggling work and home responsibilities while pursuing their education, as well as those facing significant life transitions or traumatic experiences.

As an educational institution, our constant goal is to enhance the academic performance of students.

Hence, our student counseling services also focus on identifying and resolving any emotional, psychological, or behavioral obstacles that can impede a student's progress. Counselors collaborate with students to develop strategies aimed at managing any anxiety they may face or which might affect their academic performance.



### Our Accomplishments

We have successfully supported numerous students from diverse backgrounds in overcoming academic challenges and identifying obstacles that hinder effective learning. In cases where it is deemed necessary, our department refers students requiring psychological support to suitable mental health providers.

Feel free to book an appointment for a one-on-one call by emailing [student.counselor@iou.edu.gm](mailto:student.counselor@iou.edu.gm)



### By Sayema Zulfeqar

Sayema Zulfeqar is a Student Counselor at IOU. She holds a double bachelors in Psychology and a post-graduate certificate in Islamic Psychology from Charles Sturt University, wherein, she received the Executive Dean's Award for her outstanding performance. She is currently pursuing a post-graduate diploma in Islamic Psychology at Cambridge Muslim College and has authored a Muslim mental wellness journal.



## IOU IN FOCUS



## The Emerging Success of IOU's IMAS Project

It is true that investment in education plays a pivotal role in the growth and sustainability of a nation; the African continent is no exception. With sustained efforts in developing higher education, African nations can achieve steady growth by providing an educated and skilled workforce that is adaptive to the challenges of this era. In recognition of the crucial role that education plays in the development of individuals and communities, the International Open University (IOU) pioneered the 1 Million African Scholarship (IMAS) project, which offers scholarships and financial aid for one million Africans to complete graduation.

### 95 Graduates!

The IMAS project has been witnessing tremendous progress since its inception in 2017. The number of beneficiaries has continued to increase exponentially every year. In the last two semesters (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023), IMAS has inducted about 1,000 Africans to pursue the degree program of their choice. It is worth mentioning here that Nigeria and the Gambia are the

leading beneficiaries of IMAS, as well as 18 other African countries.

It has been six years since the establishment of IMAS in the Gambia. During this period, IMAS has grown and reached 20 African countries, with established IMAS study centers and coordinators in most of them. At the end of the Fall 2022 semester, 95 students were sponsored through the IMAS project and they all graduated from their respective bachelor's programs. In entirety, the Gambia and Nigeria have the highest number of graduates from IMAS.

### The Proliferation of IMAS Across Africa

IOU identified the need to reach more vulnerable students who require higher education but can not afford it. This encouraged IOU's decision to establish the IMAS project across African countries. IMAS was introduced in Tanzania in the Spring 2022 semester and has attracted over 200 beneficiaries from the country to date. To facilitate their studies and reach a larger population, IOU established the IMAS center in Pemba, equipped

it with computers, and adequately furnished the center.

Similarly, IOU recently established a IMAS center in Gweru, Zimbabwe. The town has been a Muslim minority environment with limited access to Islamic education. But with the establishment of the IMAS center, a good number of Muslim inhabitants are able to pursue a higher education with an Islamic background. So far, over twenty applicants have been recorded from the town. Furthermore, IMAS has extended its presence to Ghana, added a new study center in Tamale, and built the main center in Accra.

### IMAS Reaches Cameroon

As part of the ever-growing extension of its service across African countries, IMAS has now ventured to Cameroon. As we prepare to enter into the Fall 2023 semester, thirty-five applicants are currently working towards satisfying the scholarship requirements and being a part of the IOU student body, in sha Allah.



### By Yusuf Ademola Adesina

Yusuf Ademola Adesina works with IOU at the bursary office under the Bursary and Community Outreach Department. He obtained a bachelor's degree in Psychology from IOU in 2018. He is also a medical student in Nigeria.

## Top 10 Awareness Month Winners SPRING 2023



**THE GAMBIA**  
Student Committee



**INDONESIA**  
Student Committee



**OMAN SISTERS**  
Student Committee

4<sup>th</sup> Consolation Win

**KSA Riyadh  
Brothers Student  
Committee**

5<sup>th</sup> Consolation Win

**Bangladesh  
Sisters Student  
Committee**

6<sup>th</sup> Consolation Win

**Eswatini Student  
Committee**

7<sup>th</sup> Consolation Win

**Tanzania Student  
Committee**

8<sup>th</sup> Consolation Win

**UAE Student  
Committee**

9<sup>th</sup> Consolation Win

**Malaysia Student  
Committee**

10<sup>th</sup> Consolation Win

**South Africa  
Brothers Student  
Committee**

**Congratulations** to all participants for their innovative efforts towards promoting beneficial knowledge in their communities by introducing people to the International Open University. May Allah accept the efforts to spread the message of Islam and grant immense rewards for all the hard work and sincerity.



## IOU IN FOCUS

# Spreading the Light of Knowledge

## Inside the Oman Sisters' Student Committee

In the eastern Arabian Peninsula, a vibrant sisters' committee is flourishing with a myriad of activities for the International Open University (IOU). The IOU Oman Sisters' Committee, which has bagged the second runner-up place for Awareness Month Spring 2023, began its operations right in the middle of the global pandemic in Fall 2020.

### From the Committee's Scroll

The Oman Sisters' Committee is more than just a committee; it is a family. We, the committee members, have a beautiful understanding and relationship among us that helps us collaborate on different projects together. We are immensely grateful to IOU for providing the platform to build this amazing sisterhood, through which we intend to develop ourselves and others.

Through our webinars, we seek to enlighten people with knowledge, spark an interest in them to learn more about the fascinating topics of our *Deen*, and at the same time, inspire others to be a part of the incredible International Open University. Our online sessions have so far covered topics such as the memorization of the Qur'an, tajweed, mental health, physical health, Ramadan and its significance, da'wah, arts of communication, lessons from the Prophet's ﷺ life, the history of Muslims during the Dark Ages, and much more *alhamdulillah!*

WhatsApp groups have been created especially to facilitate communication between us and our participants, where we welcome feedback and suggestions from different parts of the world. Our WhatsApp Community, which has around 500 participants, currently creates fun quizzes based on the topics we have covered and announces the winners in the Oman Events WhatsApp groups periodically. We try our best to provide help and support to anyone reaching out to us through the IOU Oman Sisters group.

We are extremely grateful for the amazing opportunities that we have had to host webinars on the IOU platform and interact with various communities around the world. As part of the Oman Sisters' Committee, we hope to ignite the spark of seeking authentic knowledge and encourage our wonderful participants to explore and dive deeper into each webinar theme we present.

May Allah bless everyone.

### Written by

**Uzma Sohail**

*Chairperson Oman Sisters' Student Committee*

**Shifaa Noor**

*Vice-Chairperson Oman Sisters' Student Committee*

# EVENTS



## EVENTS

# Embracing Knowledge & Triumph

## IOU Convocation Honors Graduates from 57 Countries

On January 7, 2023, a remarkable milestone was achieved when the International Open University (IOU) held its 9th Convocation. This auspicious occasion was not only a testament to the commitment and dedication of the students, but also marked the global footprint of the university, celebrating the graduation of 440 students from 57 diverse countries.

### Beginning the Journey of Success

The ceremony's host, Sr. Syeda Madeeha Bokhari, IOU's Registrar, set the day into motion by extending a warm welcome to all the distinguished guests, graduates, and audience members.

Dr. Muhammad Ahsan, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academics, was the first to address the graduates. In his speech, he emphasized the impact of education in transforming nations, urging the graduates to utilize their newfound knowledge to tackle the myriad of issues that confront Muslims in the age of technological advancement.

Echoing the essence of IOU's mission statement, "Changing the nation through education (particularly the Muslim Ummah)", he reiterated the importance of life-long learning. Dr. Ahsan's stirring words highlighted the university's commitment to knowledge propagation, emphasizing that the quest for wisdom does not cease with graduation.

### Ensuring Excellence

Adding to the celebratory mood, Vice Chancellor and Associate Professor Dr. Cherno Omar Barry proudly announced the recent accreditation of all undergraduate programs by the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority

(NAQAA). Dr. Barry's message was one of progress and ambition, reflecting IOU's goal to gain further accreditation for the master's and Ph.D. programs in shaa Allah. He also took honor in the academic and professional successes achieved by the IOU alumni across the globe, from the UK and USA to Canada and the Philippines. His speech served as a poignant reminder to the new graduates that knowledge, above all, is the key to differentiation and success.

### The Value of Knowledge

Adding depth to the ceremony was the guest speaker, Dr. Muhammad Salah. He acknowledged the colossal efforts behind IOU, which he equated to an undertaking on par with government projects. Citing Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ hadith, Dr. Salah emphasized the value of knowledge acquisition as a pathway to Paradise. His speech served as a heartening validation of the graduates' commitment to learning the Quran and its teachings. He further encouraged others to consider IOU, a unique institution allowing individuals to balance religious studies with personal and professional obligations.

### Turning Vision into Reality

The Chancellor of the University, Professor Dr. Bilal Philips, provided the graduates with a profound message of responsibility and empowerment. Congratulating the graduates on their momentous achievements, Dr. Philips exhorted them to be active and responsible citizens and to carry out their duties in accordance with Islamic principles. He stressed IOU's core values of imparting authentic and beneficial knowledge and urged the students to continuously engage in the process of learning and sharing knowledge, in line with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

### Moments of Triumph and Gratitude

The most anticipated part of the ceremony was the conferring of degrees to the graduates. As each name was announced, the live chat was filled with congratulatory messages, reflecting the joy and gratification of the moment. The ceremony also showcased graduate testimonials, imbued with words of inspiration, encouragement, and gratitude.

In a stirring conclusion to the event, the valedictorian, Sr. Kafayat Anuoluwapo Azeez, (BSc Psychology graduate from Nigeria) captivated the audience with her inspiring journey. Her speech was a testament to the transformative power of dedication, prayer, and the importance of character and gratitude in achieving greatness.

### A Promise of a Brighter Future

The convocation did not conclude without recognizing and rewarding the hard work and persistence of the top performers. The highest achievers of the bachelor's, master's, and bridge to diploma programs were presented with special gifts, adding to the excitement of the ceremony. The recognition of these stellar individuals reflected IOU's commitment to fostering academic excellence and the personal growth of its students. As the convocation ceremony came to a close, the host, Sr. Bokhari, expressed her appreciation to the committed academic team. Their relentless work had contributed to upholding IOU's mission and vision, assisting the students on their quest for knowledge, and maintaining the exceptional standard of IOU's educational experience. The IOU's 9th Convocation was not merely



an event; it was a celebration of the journey of learning, an acknowledgement of tireless efforts, and the commencement of a new chapter in the lives of the graduates. The sense of accomplishment was palpable as the graduates, now the ambassadors of IOU, stepped into the world, ready to inspire others with their enriched moral characters and the knowledge they had acquired. As they embarked on this new phase of their life, the words of Dr. Ahsan resonated: "You will all remain in our hearts forever."

The International Open University extends its hearty congratulations to its students and wishes them success in all their future endeavors. As this chapter ends, a new one begins, promising new opportunities to learn, grow, and continue the tradition of imparting beneficial knowledge in shaa Allah.

### WATCH HERE!



<https://youtu.be/ZdDJ2deNDvk?t=1143>

### By Mariam Sakrani

Mariam Sakrani is the Associate Registrar at IOU. She holds a Master's degree in Economics and has completed BA in Islamic Studies from IOU. She also holds an Ijaazah certificate.



## EVENTS

The eagerly-awaited winners of the IOU's International Photography Competition have been revealed! Five outstanding photos have been shortlisted from more than 300 beautifully captured entries exemplifying the creation of Allah, under the theme of this beautiful verse:

**Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day and [in] what Allah has created in the heavens and the earth are signs for a people who fear Allah.**

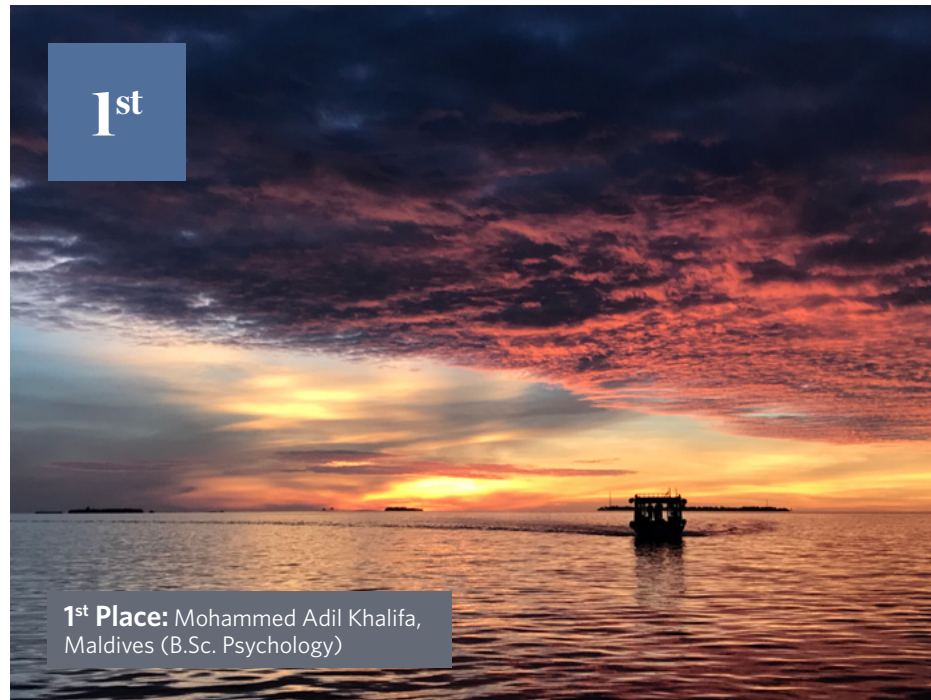
Quran (10:6)

The photographs were evaluated by highly respected scholars. The quality of the submissions was so high that it was very difficult to narrow down on the winners. The results were very close, but after careful and detailed analysis, the following students were declared winners of the competition:

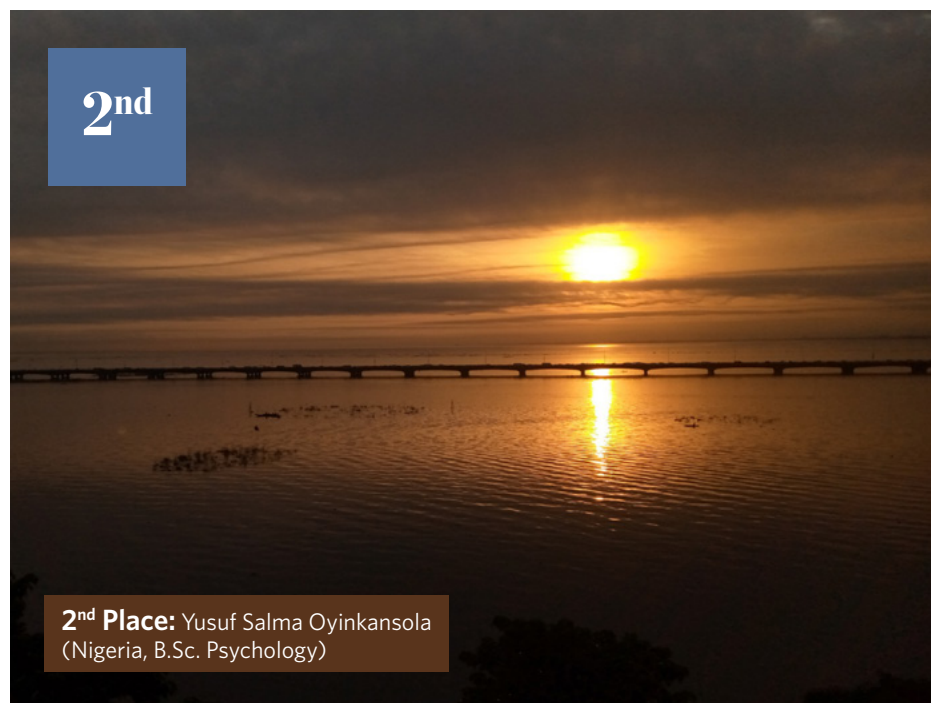
We humbly pray to Allah, the Almighty, to accept our efforts and those of the participants. May this endeavor be a means of spreading goodness and strengthening our faith. Ameen.

# Capturing the Signs of Allah

## IOU's International Photography Competition

1<sup>st</sup>

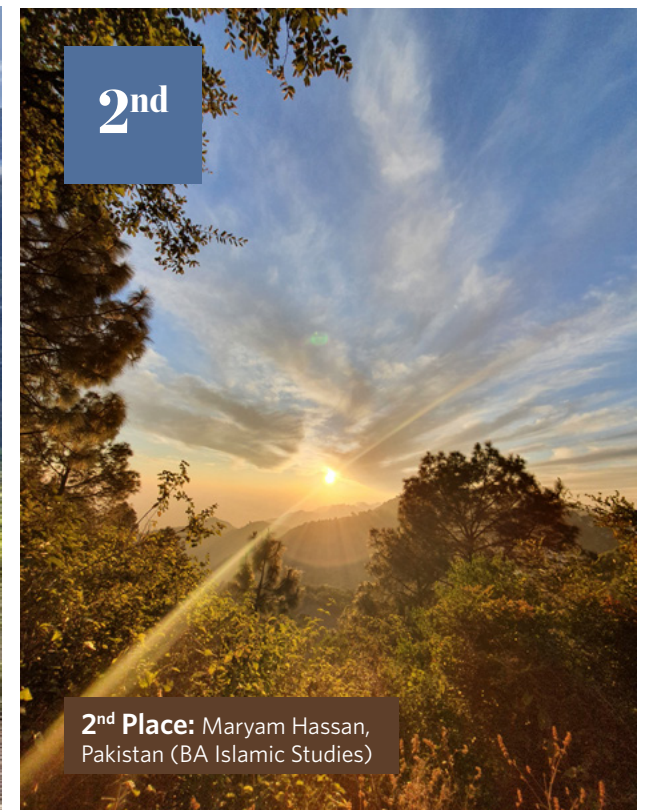
**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Mohammed Adil Khalifa, Maldives (B.Sc. Psychology)

2<sup>nd</sup>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Yusuf Salma Oyinkansola (Nigeria, B.Sc. Psychology)

1<sup>st</sup>

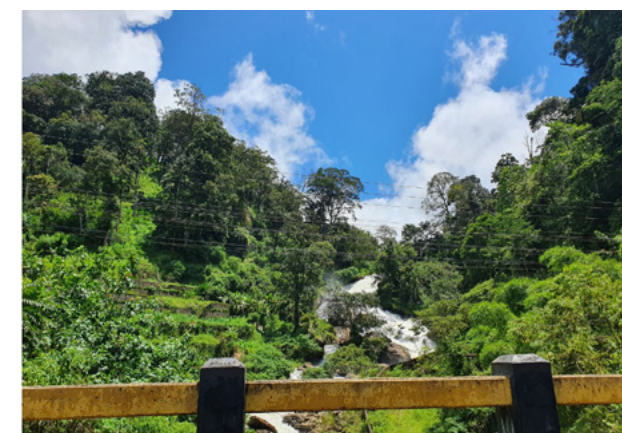
**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Hoda Ahmed, Ireland (B.Sc. Psychology)

2<sup>nd</sup>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Maryam Hassan, Pakistan (BA Islamic Studies)

3<sup>rd</sup>

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place:** Balkish Rahamathullah, Qatar (BA Islamic Studies)







# Inspiring Qur'an Learning

IOU Organizes a Global Recitation Competition for Students

## EVENTS

In the words of Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet ﷺ once said that those who recite the Qur'aan and master it by heart will be among the noble, righteous scribes in Heaven (Sahih al-Bukhari, 4937).

In the quest to motivate the reciters of Qur'aan, the International Open University (IOU) organized a Qur'aan recitation competition for its students on November 24th, 2022. It received an overwhelming response from students across the globe, with over 300 participants showcasing their proficiency in Qur'aan recitation.

The competition required the participants to recite passages from Surahs such as Al-Dukhan, Al-Qamar, Al-Maidah, and a page of their choice. Esteemed male and female scholars evaluated the competition and found it quite challenging to select winners due to the outstanding quality of all the participants!

All participants were divided into three groups: children, brothers, and sisters. The winners from each category were awarded prizes based on their performance.

In the children's group, the first position was secured by Sakinah Achmad from Indonesia. Saniya

Mustafa from India secured the second position, and Muftasir Nasir Bala from Nigeria bagged the third place.

Muhammad Nur Hadi Bin Musa from Singapore secured the first position in the brothers group. Ibrahim Abdullahi secured the second position, while Adamu bin Idris secured the third position, both hailing from Nigeria. The fourth position was taken by Wili Wilana from Indonesia, and Mohammad Aftab Ayub from Saudi Arabia secured the fifth place.

In the sisters group, the first place was bagged by Rahma Abdul Ahad from India. Marwa Abdulkader from India secured the second position, and Hafsa Adnan from Australia secured the third. Dilfa and Zubaidha Nasreen Shahul Hameed, both from India, secured the fourth and fifth positions, respectively.

All three groups' winners were awarded US\$ 150 for the first position, US\$ 125 for the second position, US\$ 100 for the third position, and US\$ 50 each for the fourth and fifth positions.

This competition provided a platform for students to showcase their Qur'aanic recitation skills, encouraged healthy competition, and promoted the learning of

Qur'aan. It also inspired students to memorize and understand the Noble Qur'aan better. Notably, the competition has provided them with an opportunity to improve their self-confidence in future contests.

The IOU is not only committed to promoting Qur'aanic learning and engagement among its students alone but also to cultivate its beautiful messages to preserve and promote the ideal Islamic values and teachings. The event which brought together students from diverse backgrounds and cultures highlighted the universality of the Qur'aan and its message and the diversity of the IOU community which has roots all around the world.

**LISTEN HERE!**



<https://iou.edu.gm/student-affairs-office-sao/student-engagement-activities/>

# Mabrook!

*Winners of the Global Qur'aan Recitation Competition*

	BROTHERS	
1	Muhammad Nur Hadi Bin Musa	Singapore
2	Ibrahim Abdullahi	Nigeria
3	Adamu bin Idris	Nigeria
4	Wili Wilana	Indonesia
5	Mohammad Aftab Ayub	Saudi Arabia

	SISTERS	
1	Rahma Abdul Ahad	India
2	Marwa Abdulkader	India
3	Hafsa Adnan	Australia
4	Dilfa	India
5	Zubaidha Nasreen Shahul Hameed	India

	CHILDREN	
1	Sakinah Achmad	Indonesia
2	Saniya Mustafa	India
3	Muftasir Nasir Bala	Nigeria





## EVENTS

# 3<sup>rd</sup> IOUCRIS

## A Platform for Researchers & Academics

The International Open University Conference on Research and Integrated Sciences (IOUCRIS) is a platform that brings together researchers, academics, and practitioners from across the globe to discuss and share current integrated science research concerns. The third edition of this unique conference, organized by the International Open University (IOU) and the Open University of Malaysia (OUM), took place in Malaysia on February 23rd, 2023.

Both parties sought to collaborate and network in their research, with Arabic language studies, Islamic banking and economics, business administration, information

technology, psychology, education, and multidisciplinary disciplines being the main areas of concentration.

There were over 150 entries from different countries, and 71 were presented in face-to-face parallel sessions during the conference. It was an eventful meeting that received a wonderful response, as the platform allowed individuals to offer their perspectives in various disciplines. The presented studies were under consideration for publication in the Journal of Integrated Sciences, and awards were promised for the best papers prepared by students and experts in two categories.

The occasion began with a lovely dua, followed by pre-recorded words of appreciation from the Chancellor Dr. Bilal Philips and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Ahsan. They extolled the virtues and potential benefits that IOUCRIS could provide, Inshaa Allah.

The first keynote speaker, OUM Vice-President Dr. Muhammad Tajuddin, spoke on the "Power of Psychological DNA." The research report emphasized the fundamental advantages of understanding one's behavior and mental processes. It defined several personality problems that people should be aware of when interacting with diverse

personalities. Interactions can occur between a teacher and a student, a manager and an employee, family members, and so on. Human Resources (HR) professionals were advised to use psychometric evaluations to help them make decisions. These tests will assist them in hiring someone with a positive personality and considering other skills such as abilities, academic performance, and first impressions. Dr. Tajuddin then discussed psychological poverty, stating that a psychologically poor person lacks beneficial characteristics. In response to the aforementioned psychological concerns, Dr. Tajuddin has written "Tajma", a fifth-edition book that teaches people how to identify psychological qualities and it is available in English and Malay online.

Dr. Muhammad Aminul Islam delivered the second keynote address titled "Sustainability of Microenterprises in a VUCA World". VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, and it characterizes difficult-to-plan conditions. It is mostly aimed at villagers struggling to make ends meet due to globalization and technological advancements. Even though these elements have led to a significant increase in

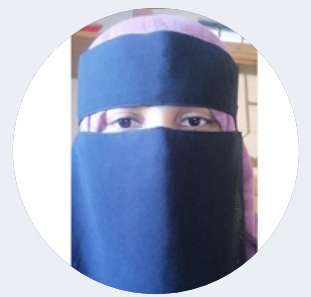
industrialization, they have also resulted in unemployment by replacing human labor with robots, and students are forced to work in fields unrelated to their studies. Therefore, microenterprises are highly encouraged, particularly in developing or undeveloped countries, to help people support themselves and their families.

The third IOUCRIS was a fruitful and successful event. The information provided was extremely informative, inspirational, and motivating to the attendees and spectators, Alhamdulillah!

### WATCH HERE!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzCFjAY6NA4>



### By Buthayna Abdulhalim

Buthayna Abdulhalim is an accountant from Mombasa, Kenya. She is an IOU alumnus from the field of Islamic Banking and Economics and a graduate of International business administration with a specialization in accounts from the Technical University of Rustaq, Oman.



### Lubnah Abdulhalim

Lubnah Abdulhalim is a writer & trainer from Mombasa, Kenya. She's an IOU graduate from the Psychology department and works as a communication consultant.



The Journal of Integrated Sciences (JIS) is a quarterly, multi-disciplinary, anonymously peer-reviewed publication established by IOU. The journal aims to publish quality academic research papers and review articles, with a particular focus on studies within the realm of Islamic sciences, and their impact on contemporary Muslim society. Submissions are open to the public, but are subject to rigorous evaluation by our editorial team, and a distinguished review panel consisting of renowned scholars from around the world. For more details please visit [jis.iou.edu.gm](http://jis.iou.edu.gm).





# ALUMNI

## SPOTLIGHT



### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



## Exploring the Wonders of Empathy

### The Journey of a Psychology Graduate

From the moment I stepped into nursing school, I knew that my heart belonged to the world of psychology. Despite the misguided beliefs held by some, such as the absurd notion that psychologists are prone to developing mental illnesses themselves; I was driven by the passion to explore the intricacies of the human mind.

During a summer visit to my family, a friend recounted attending a promotional presentation of the International Open University (IOU) at a local mosque. Despite my limited exposure to online studies, I have always been willing to embrace new experiences with open arms.

Enrolling in the program was the first hurdle, and

I struggled to navigate the virtual campus. At that time, all I knew was how to log in, and even the simple task of registering for the courses seemed like an insurmountable mountain to climb. However, with the kind assistance of the national representative, I overcame the obstacles that stood between me and my educational aspirations.

Alhamdulillah, as I finally embarked on my academic journey, I discovered an unexpected twist—my minor was Islamic Studies! It was a delightful surprise, as I had never anticipated this combination. The university suddenly became an extraordinary haven where I could study psychology, a field often misconstrued as conflicting with Islamic beliefs due to its



theories, but now taught from a profound Islamic perspective.

As I began my studies, I found the course to be nothing short of captivating. It not only bolstered my self-image but also deepened my relationship with Allah and my fellow humans through the profound impact of intrapersonal communication. Moreover, it honed my time-management skills, making me more conscious of the precious gift of time. Among the most transformative aspects of the course was its teachings on the crucial role of parents in the upbringing of children.

**Professionally, as a clinical nurse practitioner, the course proved to be a game-changer. It strengthened my skills in therapeutic communication and health education, elevating my ability to empathize with my clients' psychological struggles. As a nurse, I became more effective in instilling a sense of well-being and assurance in their hearts.**

Driven by a newfound passion, I took the initiative to establish a madrassa for children and youth, where I provided therapeutic communication and health education to patients and clients. Additionally, I found immense joy in offering educational guidance and counseling services. My da'wah efforts became more fervent. Presently I am coordinating the 1MAS (1 Million African Scholarships) project in Jigawa State, Nigeria.

The study of psychology, especially when approached through an Islamic lens, is an indispensable journey of self-discovery. In the current global landscape, where mental health issues are skyrocketing and desperate cries for help resound, the study of psychology becomes an urgent necessity worldwide. This is

particularly true in Africa, where a dire shortage of skilled mental health professionals amplifies the pressing need for transformative knowledge. By studying psychology from an Islamic perspective, we can unlock even greater value, as there are countless faithful Muslims across the continent.

To my colleagues at the university, I encourage you to embark on your studies with the noble intention of serving Allah and extending a helping hand to those in need. Remember the timeless wisdom of our faith, as it is authentically narrated: "Whoever relieves a believer from any worry of this world, Allah, the Almighty, will relieve them of worries in the Hereafter." (Sahih Muslim).



### By Musbahu Sadiq Aminu

BSc Psychology Graduate  
Spring 2018

Musbahu Sadiq Aminu is a clinical nurse at Rasheed Shekoni Teaching Hospital in Dutse, Nigeria, and a member of the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives. He is also the coordinator of Fountain of Learning Academy and chairman of the Solidarity Network Forum in Dutse. He coordinates IOU's 1MAS project at the Jigawa study center.

# GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS



**Join IAA Social Media  
platforms**





GLOBAL  
COLLABORATIONS

# IOU Malaysia Springs into Action

The International Open University (IOU) is an online institution with students from across the globe, enrolled in various certificate and degree programs. The IOU also has student committees in each country to cater to the needs of the students, engage in learning activities, and help boost enrollment by conducting

awareness programs for prospective students.

The IOU Malaysia chapter is no different. It has held diverse events during the Spring 2023 session by collaborating with local institutions in the country to spread knowledge, add value to the Muslim community, and raise awareness of IOU courses.

## THE GREATEST WOMAN

A lecture series by IOU and IIUM

IOU teamed up with the International Islamic University Malaysia's (IIUM) Islamic society "Revivers" to conduct a lecture series on "The Greatest Women", taught by four speakers: Ustadh Shareef El Arbi, Sheikh Mohammad Qutub, Sheikh Isam Rajab, and Sheikh Ibrahim Nuhu. This series

ran for four months from October to December 2022, attracting students and alumni from various universities, as well as their families and friends. IOU Malaysia publicized the event in collaboration with the Revivers team through social media and distributed IOU flyers to all attendees.



## WAHN: DESIRING DUNYA, BELITTling HEREAFTER

An Islamic Convention by The Straight Path

The global pandemic had brought several activities to a grinding halt, so it was a rare treat for IOU to join hands with the Straight Path team to conduct the first biggest Islamic convention post-pandemic in December 2022. This two-day convention was held at Menara Kembar

Bank Rakyat in Kuala Lumpur, with around 2,500 attendees and featured key speakers Dr. Sajid Umar, Sheikh Said Rageah, Dr. Zaharuddin, Br. Faisal, and Br. Lim. Throughout the event, IOU Malaysia distributed promotional materials to raise awareness of IOU courses and programs among the audience.



## OPEN SCHOOL DAY

Triple collaboration by IOU, ICDC, and IIT

The Islamic Child Development Centre (ICDC) and International Integrated Tahfiz (IIT) are Islamic-oriented schools for children aged 4 to 13. They provide education in Quran, Islam, Arabic, English, Math, and Science. Given their shared focus, it was a natural fit for IOU to collaborate with ICDC and IIT on Open School Day in January 2023. The event aimed to raise awareness among parents and potential students about IOU's General Diploma courses and tertiary education programs.



By Muhammad  
Umairun

Muhammad Umairun is the IOU Representative for Malaysia & Singapore and admin assistant in IOU's Administrative Department. He has been working with IOU since May 2022 and is involved in Malaysia's on-ground activities. He graduated from Kingston University with a Bachelor's of Engineering in Aircraft Engineering.



GLOBAL  
COLLABORATIONS

## Dr. Bilal Philips Meets the Gambian Ambassador to Promote Academic Opportunities



Dr Bilal Philips with the Gambian ambassador to Qatar, Foday Malang and Councilor Musa Muhamad Bah

IOU's founder and chancellor, Dr. Bilal Philips, met with the Gambian ambassador to Qatar, Foday Malang, to explore new opportunities for educational collaborations. The two met at the embassy to discuss fostering academic partnerships to advance educational prospects for IOU graduates.

A very beneficial prospect was also considered with the councilor, Musa Muhamad Bah. Dr. Philips presented the idea for IOU graduates to continue their studies at Qatar University by offering them scholarships. Bah expressed his willingness to facilitate a meeting between Dr. Bilal and the head of Qatar University to assist IOU graduates in expanding their educational horizons.

During the meeting, Dr. Philips presented a copy of IOU's 1MAS report (1 Million African Scholarships), shedding light on the project's progress in Gambia. The 1MAS project focused

on establishing learning centers across all regions of Gambia, making education more accessible. Dr. Philips showcased pictures of the IOU center in Soma, exemplifying the organization's commitment to providing quality education.

Dr. Philips discussed his vision of a fully functional IOU headquarters and his intention of branching into Basai and other areas. These plans were enthusiastically shared with the ambassador and other embassy officials, fostering a sense of anticipation for the university's continued growth.

Dr. Philips presented copies of the IOU *Insights* magazine to the embassy, offering valuable information about the university's initiatives and achievements - especially the generous donation of 1000 scholarships to the Gambia, evoking gratitude and appreciation from the embassy for his contribution to the country's educational landscape.

The meeting with the ambassador facilitated Dr. Philips in obtaining his Gambian diplomatic passport and ensuring its registration with the embassy, solidifying his ties with the Gambia.

As a gesture of goodwill, Dr. Philips also shared copies of his book, featuring a translation and commentary on a classical work on predestination (*Qadr*), with the embassy staff. This further demonstrated his dedication to disseminating knowledge and promoting intellectual growth.

This momentous meeting between Dr. Bilal Philips and the Gambian Ambassador signifies a promising step towards expanding educational prospects and fostering collaboration between IOU and prestigious institutions like Qatar University. With continued efforts, it is anticipated that the partnership will open doors for Gambian students, enabling them to access world-class education and a chance to contribute to the development of their nation, in shaa Allah.

GLOBAL  
COLLABORATIONS

## IOU Championed at eLearning Africa 2023



Dr. Chernob Barry with delegates at the IOU stall at the conference

The International Online University (IOU) recently made waves at the prestigious eLearning Africa 2023 conference held at the Abdou Douf International Conference Centre in Dakar, Senegal. This three-day event attracted esteemed institutions from around the globe, creating a unique platform for collaboration and innovation.

After a warm welcome from the organizers, the IOU team swiftly set up an eye-catching booth adorned with two banners and a screen showcasing dynamic IOU promotional videos. Additionally, IOU *Insights* magazines and flyers were displayed strategically, providing attendees with comprehensive information about IOU's exceptional programs, including the highly coveted 1 Million African Scholarships (1MAS).

The overwhelming number of visitors — many of whom had never encountered IOU before — was a testament to the institution's growing impact. Each day, over thirty individuals, including students, esteemed figures, government officials, and representatives from various organizations, flocked to IOU's booth. Intrigued by IOU's offerings, many expressed interest in joining. After answering their questions, several pledged to refer their networks to the institution.

Throughout the exhibition, the team encountered a multitude of inquiries. Most notably, visitors were curious about IOU's accreditation status, geographical location, and whether IOU provided English-language programs to non-English speakers. This diversity of interest reflected the visitors' countries of origin, which spanned across the globe, including Germany,

South Africa, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Nigeria, Uganda, Senegal, Mozambique, Ivory Coast, Belgium, and more. IOU passionately shared its mission, highlighting its impressive program offerings, past accomplishments, and accreditation, thus establishing meaningful connections with the diverse audience.

Notably, the exhibition shed light on the demand for French-language programs. French-speaking attendees, particularly from countries such as Senegal, Cameroon, and Ivory Coast, suggested that IOU expand its curriculum to cater to this significant market segment.

The eLearning Africa 2023 event brought immense success for IOU. The institution's presence attracted the attention of influential organizations like GIZ, the World Bank, and the International Development Bank. This exposure facilitated IOU's recognition among individuals who may not have otherwise been aware of its existence. Additionally, numerous visitors expressed keen interest in collaborating with IOU, impressed by the institute's diverse student body.

Currently, IOU is diligently following up with the contacts established during the event and exploring potential partnerships. Some of these contacts have even offered to provide IOU with learning centers in their respective countries. For instance, in Senegal, there is a demand for programs like Islamic Studies, Islamic Banking and Finance, and Arabic Linguistics and Grammar. One enthusiastic visitor, an Islamic Finance, Marketing, and Management strategy consultant, expressed a desire to become an ambassador for IOU, actively encouraging his network to join the institution.

The General Manager of the Distance Learning Centre of Ivory Coast (DLC-CI)\*, representing the Ministry of Civil Service of the Republic of Ivory Coast, expressed a similar sentiment. He recommended that IOU explore the market in Ivory Coast by launching an English Language program. Furthermore, he offered to assist in establishing a base for IOU within the country and expressed his interest in studying English through IOU, either onsite or online.

The eLearning Africa 2023 exhibition provided a remarkable opportunity for IOU to showcase its offerings to the vibrant eLearning community hailing from various countries. As a first-time participant in such a prominent event, IOU left an indelible mark, leveraging the experience gained and the valuable networks established to fuel its growth in other regions of the world in shaa Allah. The event serves as a strong reference point for future endeavors of a similar nature, reinforcing IOU's position as a leading institution in the online education sphere Alhamdulillah.





**Ilm Institute**

## Explore Exciting New Courses at Ilm Institute

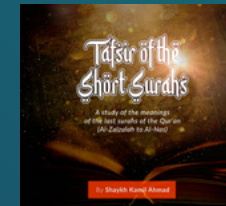
Finding the time to complete a degree program in today's fast-paced world can be difficult, particularly for Muslim students seeking expertise in specific fields. Recognizing this need, the International Open University (IOU) established a specialized platform to connect Muslim students with knowledgeable instructors and world leaders. Founded in 2019, the Ilm Institute conveniently provides a range of professional, Islamic, and contemporary courses without requiring the commitment to a degree program. This article explores the newest subjects available to give you a chance to broaden your horizons and improve your grasp of various subjects.

### Lesson Plan Integration (LPI) Course



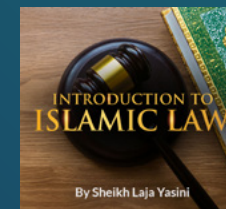
Are you a teacher, administrator, or homeschooler trying to incorporate Islamic principles into your lessons? Look no further than the Ilm Institute's Lesson Plan Integration (LPI) Course. This life-changing training equips you to seamlessly blend Islamic scriptures and practices suitable for students of all ages into your lessons. You can promote morality and God-consciousness (taqwa) in your classroom by developing your skills as a great searcher, connector, and weaver of Islamic information. Learn the skill of lesson plan integration (LPI) and encourage young people to accept and connect with Islamic beliefs.

### Tafsir of the Short Surahs



Do you long to learn more about the short surahs you recite during your daily prayers? The Tafsir of the Short Surahs course from Ilm Institute will give you a thorough grasp of surahs from Al-Zalzalah to Al-Nas. Gain knowledge, reflect on the wisdom of the Quran, and develop a closer relationship with Allah's words. This course is your key to unlocking the spiritual beauty and meaning of these surahs.

### Introduction to Islamic Law



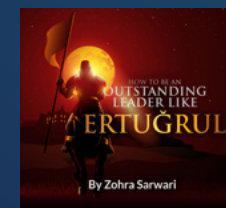
Shariah, fiqh, and Islamic law—these terms often stir curiosity and misunderstanding. Ilm Institute's Introduction to Islamic Law course aims to clarify these concepts for you. Explore the scope, origins, and sources of Islamic law, gain insights into its principles, and understand its objectives. Discover the historical, religious, and modern dimensions of Islamic law, allowing you to appreciate its importance and relevance in today's world. Whether you're a Muslim or simply curious, this course will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic law. **About the Instructor:** Shaykh Laja Yasini is an instructor at IOU for courses on Islamic law. He has a Diploma in Arabic, Thaanawiya certificate and a Bachelor's Degree in Sharia, from there Islamic University of Madinah.

### How To Raise Obedient Children



Parenting is an exceptional journey filled with challenges, especially when it comes to instilling obedience in children through the lens of Islam. Ilm Institute's How To Raise Obedient Children course offers practical guidance to help you build a strong bond with your children while fostering obedience. Learn effective and practical strategies, including emotional availability, phases of building a caring relationship, and time-out techniques, to create a harmonious home environment and an unbreakable bond with your children. Discover the joy of positive interactions with your children, free from stress and intimidation.

### How To Be An Outstanding Leader Like Ertugrul



Inspired by the legendary character Ertugrul from the popular TV series, this Ilm Institute course provides invaluable insights into leadership. Learn to enhance self-confidence, clarify your vision, and develop exceptional communication skills. Influence others in your personal and professional life, avoid common leadership pitfalls, and foster emotional connections with people. This course will empower you to become an outstanding leader in all aspects of your life.





In a world where mental health is often overlooked, Solace Islamic Mental Health Services stands as a beacon of light. Founded by Dr. Bilal Philips in 2013, Solace embarked on a mission to provide comprehensive mental health services from an Islamic perspective. After a brief hiatus, Solace has returned stronger than ever, ready to continue its noble work.

### **An Islamicized Perspective of Mental Health Services**

Mohammed Safwan Ibrahim, Head of Administration, takes great pride in Solace's ability to offer Islamic counseling services specifically tailored to the needs of Muslims. Recognizing the importance of integrating faith into the healing process, Solace adopts a Quran and Sunnah-focused approach, ensuring individuals receive guidance aligned with the teachings of Islam. The primary goal is to provide a comprehensive and profound healing experience by aligning their services with the principles of the Islamic faith.

### **Range of Services**

Solace's core services encompass a broad spectrum of counseling. With a dedicated team of skilled counselors, Solace offers support in areas such as Islamic Counseling, General Counseling, Mental Health Counseling, and Family & Marital Counseling. By addressing these diverse categories, Solace addresses the unique challenges confronting individuals at various stages of life.

### **Affordable and Accessible Services**

One remarkable aspect of Solace is its commitment to providing affordable mental health services. Recognizing the varying economic conditions around the world, Solace charges significantly lower fees in developing countries than in developed ones. They aim to make their services accessible to individuals from all economic backgrounds, irrespective of their financial circumstances.

### **Workshops and Conferences**

Solace organized a conference during Ramadan. The session was opened by Dr. Francesca Bocca-Aldaqre, the Head of Psychology & Counselor at Solace,

with Bela Khan, Head of Learning and Development & Counselor at Solace. The conference featured esteemed scholar Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Anwar Sahib, who delivered a captivating talk on Authentic Spirituality according to the Quran and Sunnah. Seyed Jamaluddin Miri led a session discussing the Islamic vs Secular Stance on Anxiety and Depression. Dr. Francesca Bocca Aldacre provided valuable insights on Tips for Dealing with Stress. Likewise, Gabriel Al Romaani conducted a session on Men's Mental Health- Stigma and Solutions. The conference emphasized solutions rather than dwelling on problems, resonating with attendees and fostering positive interactions.

### **Future Endeavors**

Solace has ambitious plans for the future, In Sha Allah. They intend to introduce online coaching, a Muslim Live Certification Program, and Imam's consultation services, further extending their reach and impact. Their main inspiration is to bridge the gap between mental health support and the Islamic faith. Solace aspires to serve Muslims worldwide, offering guidance and counseling through an Islamic and Quranic lens.

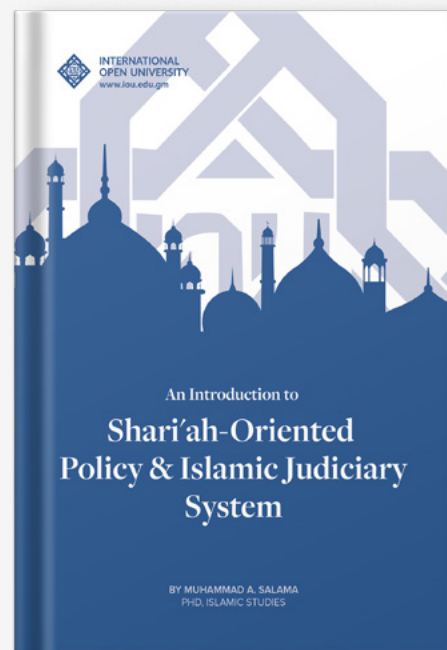
Solace Islamic Mental Health Services has emerged as a compassionate and transformative resource for Muslims seeking support for their mental well-being. Offering Islamic counseling services and emphasizing affordability, Solace has created a haven where individuals can find solace, healing, and personal growth. Solace reminds us that the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah are not only a source of spiritual guidance but also hold immense power in nurturing our mental well-being. May Solace continue to flourish and comfort those in need, reminding us that healing and hope are always within reach through the blessings of Islam.

**To know more visit:** [www.solace-services.com](http://www.solace-services.com)





## BOOK LAUNCH



## An Introduction to Shari'ah-Oriented Policy & Islamic Judiciary System

By Dr. Muhammad A. Salama,  
Ph.D. (Islamic Studies)

Globalization and secularism have ruthlessly impacted the Muslim world, causing the glories of Islamic law and civilization to be forgotten or deliberately overlooked. New narratives written by orientalist have emerged, distorting the fabric of Islamic society.

This book, authored by Dr. Muhammed A. Salama, enlightens readers about shari'ah-based governance and the judiciary grounded in Islamic law in simple English, making it palatable for people from different spheres and walks of life. Since most of these political and judiciary issues are primarily found in Arabic sources, non-Arabic readers often encounter difficulties accessing them. The book specifically targets English readers, including both Muslims and non-Muslims, intending to raise awareness about traditional Islamic scholarship on several significant issues of contemporary relevance.

The book has two parts: Part One presents the classical Islamic view of the Muslim state as presented by traditional Muslim scholars and generally applied over fourteen centuries. In this part, the reader can find discussions focusing on the philosophy of a Muslim state, how it regulates the relationship between the ruler and the subjects, and how it organizes its international relations.

A thorough comparison is conducted between shari'ah-oriented policy and conventional or man-made politics and governance. The shari'ah-oriented policy draws its foundation from the Qur'an, unnah, ijmaa', qiyas, and other deductive reasoning methods. In contrast, conventional politics and governance rely heavily on human intellect, which is inherently flexible, gradually shifting, and subject to change over time and within different communities.

The book explains the pillars of authority within the Muslim state, emphasizing the unique characteristics of shari'ah-oriented policy. It highlights that ultimate supremacy lies with Allah and His laws, distinguishing it from other forms of government. In democratic systems, supremacy is attributed to the people, while in dictatorships, it rests with the ruler.

The book discusses the protections and rights of non-Muslims residing within the state. It explores the principles and guidelines that ensure the fair treatment and safeguarding of the rights of non-Muslim individuals, highlighting the inclusive nature of the Islamic political system.

Continuing the narrative, the second part of the book focuses on the Islamic judiciary system and how it worked within the context of the Islamic state to achieve justice through diverse judiciary mechanisms. Additionally, it provides insights into the functioning of the judiciary during the time of the rightly-guided caliphs, shedding light on historical precedents and practices that shaped the development of Islamic jurisprudence.

To sum it up, the book emphasizes the importance of acquiring a comprehensive understanding of how society is governed by the divine injunctions of Allah (SWT) and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

### PURCHASE AT THE IOU STORE

Reviewed by  
**Mufutau Oyedapo Raufu**

Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, IOU



## Comments from Our Readers

### PREVIOUS ISSUE 12

**Aqsa Qamar**

Bahrain

*This is the first time I am reading Insights and I was surprised and delighted to come across this magazine because I didn't know that IOU had magazines as well. I really enjoyed it and came across many valuable tips. I can't wait for the next issue!*

**Dilnawaaz**

South Africa

*The diverse content in Insights is relevant in every student's/person's life!*

**Anas**

Philippines

*As a student of IOU, it was a delight to see offline activities of the university, especially at the headquarters in The Gambia, published in the magazine. I was also excited to read about IOU's presence in countries worldwide.*

**Dr. Umaru Garba**

Nigeria

*One of the aspects I liked best about IOU's Insights magazine is its innovative design.*

**Fathima**

India

*The magazine provides a holistic and interesting overview about IOU and its educational prospects. It's a must-read for Muslims in the education sector and students.*

**Kazi Asadullah Al Galib**

Bangladesh

*The Insights magazine is very informative and the content is presented in a short but lucrative way.*

You can read our previous issues here: [www.iou.edu.gm/insights-magazine](http://www.iou.edu.gm/insights-magazine)



## YOUR VIEWS

### Your Feedback is Welcome!

We'd love to hear what you thought about Insights.

### SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK

If you would like to contribute to the magazine or volunteer with IOU Insights, please email: [insights@iou.edu.gm](mailto:insights@iou.edu.gm)





# 1 MILLION SCHOLARSHIPS FOR AFRICAN YOUTH

Our beautiful prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: When a person dies, his deeds come to an end, except for three: ongoing charity (Soclaqah Jariyah), knowledge that is benefited from, and a righteous child who prays for him."

(Sahih Muslim)

If you give a **small donation today** you can earn a mountain of **continuous reward** (Sadaqah Jariyah) for your small deeds

**DONATE NOW**

[www.golf.org.my/1mas](http://www.golf.org.my/1mas)





# HUNGRY FOR KNOWLEDGE?

Seeking **authentic knowledge** couldn't get any easier.



## INTERNATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

The International Open University (IOU) is a pioneer in virtual education founded in 2001 by the well-known Islamic scholar, Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips. It offers affordable certificates, diplomas and degrees in Islamic and Islamized modern subjects available globally for all. Its mission is to

*"Change the Nation through Education"*

### Why Study at IOU

- Affordable Fees
- Study Anytime
- Learn Anywhere
- Accredited Degrees
- Online eLearning
- Islamized Education



## Programs at the International Open University (IOU)

### Islamic Studies

- Bachelor in Islamic Studies (BAIS)
- PostGrad in Islamic Studies (BMAIS)
- Master in Islamic Studies (MAIS)
- Doctorate in Islamic Sciences (Soon)

### Psychology

- Certificate in Psychology (CPSY)
- Associate in Psychology (APSY)
- Bachelor in Psychology (BSc PSY)
- Master in Psychology (MSc PIC)

### Business Administration

- Certificate in Business Admin (CBA)
- Associate in Business Admin (ABA)
- Bachelor in Business Admin (BBA)
- Master in Business Admin (Soon)

### Information Technology

- Certificate in Information Tech (CIT)
- Associate in Information Tech (AIT)
- Bachelor in Information Tech (BSc IT)
- Master in Information Tech (Soon)

### Arabic Language

- Intensive Arabic Program (IAP)
- Bachelor in Arabic Language (BA ALS)
- PostGrad in Arabic Language (BMARB)
- Master in Arabic Language (MA ALS)

### Education

- Certificate in Education (CEd)
- Associate in Education (AEEd)
- Bachelor in Education (BEEd)
- Master in Education (Soon)

### Economics & Finance

- Certificate in Islamic Finance (CIBE)
- Associate in Islamic Finance (AIBE)
- Bachelor in Islamic Finance (BSc IEBF)
- Master in Islamic Finance (Soon)

### Others

- General Diploma in Islamic Studies
- Quran Memorization & Tajweed
- New Muslims Certificate
- Special Workshops
- Ilm Institute Short Courses

Registration is open all year. Classes begin in March (Spring) and September (Fall).

Register early and receive a **10% DISCOUNT** on your first semester fee.

**Fee range\* is US\$80 to US\$560 per 6-month semester** for undergraduate programs depending on the study plan and student's country.

\*Prices are subject to change without notice. See program fee details at [www.iou.edu.gm/fees](http://www.iou.edu.gm/fees)

### Global Headquarters

📍 21 Kanifing Mosque Road, Kanifing South, KMC, The Gambia

☎ +220 437 9687 📞 +60 17 223 5770

🌐 [www.iou.edu.gm](http://www.iou.edu.gm) 📧 [info@iou.edu.gm](mailto:info@iou.edu.gm)

📘 islamiconlineuniversity 🐦 @mediaiou 📷 @international\_open\_university



### DR. BILAL PHILIPS

#### Founder and Chancellor

- BA in Islamic Studies, Saudi Arabia
- MA in Islamic Theology, Saudi Arabia
- PhD in Islamic Theology, UK
- Author of over 50 Islamic books
- Listed in "The Muslim 500" journal

### ACCREDITATION

IOU received a university license in 2014 from the Ministry of Higher Education, The Gambia and has institutional and program accreditation from the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) in The Gambia.





INTERNATIONAL  
OPEN UNIVERSITY  
[www.iou.edu.gm](http://www.iou.edu.gm)



The **International Open University (IOU)** aims to grant global access to quality undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate level education programs for students at virtually no cost. Its mission is to *“Change the Muslim nation and the world situation through appropriate education.”*