

4th Issue **VOLUME 1 : JULY 2025**

UiTM MUKAH BULLETIN



Inou Dengah UiTM Mukah?

4th Issue | Volume 1 | July 2025



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Published by:

Corporate Communication Unit, UiTM Mukah Campus

eISSN : 2976-257X

Published Date : 4 July 2025

RECLAIMING THE MIND: THE URGENCY OF ISLAMISING HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

Written by: Fakhira Datu Jafri & Mazwa Rabytah Amir Abdullah

The Islamisation of Human Knowledge is a crucial initiative to restore the Islamic worldview in contemporary thought. First introduced by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in the 1970s and later expanded by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, it involves reinterpreting all forms of knowledge through an Islamic lens. This process aims to counter the influence of secular ideologies and realign education with the moral and spiritual values rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

A Western imperialism has left a lasting impact, resulting in a dualistic educational structure that separates secular and religious knowledge. This division creates a fragmented understanding of life and causes many Muslims to struggle in aligning their studies with their faith. Islamisation seeks to remove this divide by unifying knowledge under divine guidance, ensuring that learning nurtures the moral, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions of human life.

Although knowledge is inherently valuable, it can become harmful when misused or shaped by unethical values. English Literature students, for example, are frequently exposed to texts promoting ideas such as pride and racism. Works like *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *The White Man's Burden* by Rudyard Kipling depict colonial subjects in dehumanising terms, reinforcing racial hierarchies. Such representations stand in direct contrast to Islamic teachings on equality and human dignity.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, strongly condemned racial discrimination in his final sermon, stating that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, and no white person is superior to a black person, except in piety and good action. The Qur'an similarly declares, "O mankind! We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the one most mindful of Him" (49:13).

It is important to acknowledge that all major religions encourage moral values such as compassion, justice, and humility. Though differing in beliefs, they share a common aspiration to guide humanity towards ethical living and peaceful coexistence. These shared principles reinforce the idea that knowledge should serve the greater good.

For Islamisation to be effective, Muslim students and scholars must be well-grounded in both Islamic teachings and modern academic disciplines. This combination allows them to engage critically with contemporary ideas while remaining faithful to Islamic values. Thus, educational institutions play a key role by offering strong Islamic studies alongside modern subjects and encouraging analysis of current issues through an Islamic lens.

Writing and academic dialogue are powerful tools in this process. Just as Western thinkers have influenced global discourse through literature, Muslim intellectuals must present Islamic perspectives that emphasise truth, justice, and compassion. In essence, Islamisation is not a rejection of modern knowledge but a reorientation of it. The goal is to ensure that knowledge supports the moral and spiritual well-being of humanity, in line with divine guidance and for the betterment of future generations.