Islamic Studies Program
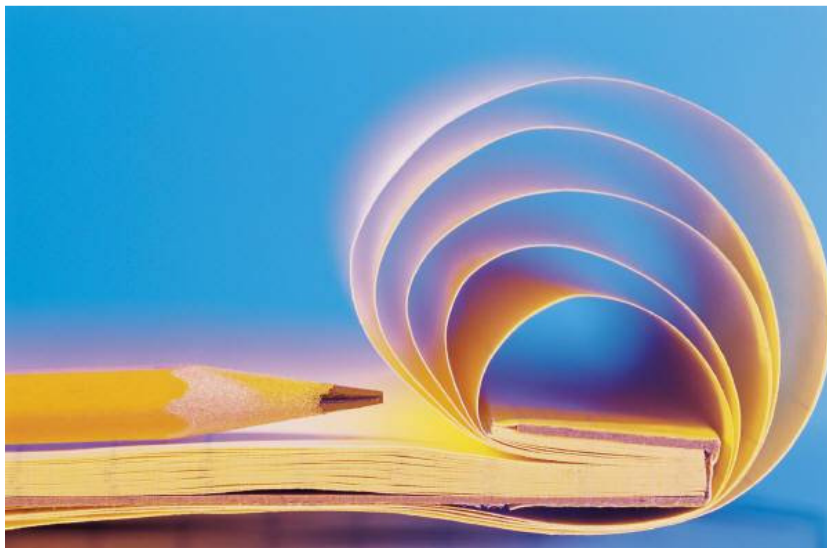
Introduction to Islamic Studies Program

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Contents

The "Islamic Studies Program" is designed to serve the needs of students of Islamic Studies. The term "Islamic Studies" was coined to describe a set of knowledge domains that are directly or indirectly related to understand the primary sources of Islam i.e. the Quran and the Sunnah. These disciplines are taught as subjects in different religious seminaries as well as in secular colleges and universities, and the students, who want to make a career in Islamic Studies, specialize in these areas.

After the great leap of technology in 1990s, we entered into a new age, often termed as the "Information Age." Magnificent achievements of information and communication technology including computers, the internet, mobile phones, satellite channels, I-Pads, electronic ink readers and many other gadgets transformed the world into a global village. People in different parts of the world, previously living their independent lives in isolated islands, are now integrating to form a global civilization.

Like many other areas of life, the communication revolution produced an extraordinary opportunity for education. Universities around the globe are introducing online education models to serve the needs of their students scattered in different locations. The objective of this program is to harness the power of communication technology to educate people about disciplines of Islamic Studies.

1. The Traditional Education System

Our traditional education system for Islamic Studies embraces various issues that include:

- The objective of curriculum taught at traditional seminaries is to produce missionaries and preachers of a particular sect or a school of thought. The student's mind is imparted with an ideology of advocating their group and refuting other groups, which results in closed-mindedness, biasness and eventually violence. A system of religious education is required, which creates open-mindedness, curbs partiality and produces missionaries of Islam rather than those of particular sects.

- The current syllabus taught in most of religious seminaries was designed for the specific needs of the middle ages that encompassed secular disciplines along with the religious ones to meet the demands of that time. Now, many of these secular subjects like Aristotelian logic, mediaeval philosophy and mediaeval science have become obsolete and plenty of other disciplines have evolved that have not only raised serious questions about Islam in modern times, but also created great opportunities for preaching of Islam. It is incumbent upon us to replace the obsolete domains with their more relevant counterparts.

- Modern educational techniques like virtual classrooms, audio-visual presentations, textbooks written in modern style etc. are generally not adopted by most of the seminaries. Advantage of these inventions should be harnessed.

- The above-mentioned problems are usually not found in the courses of Islamic Studies being taught at modern universities at graduation, post graduation and doctoral levels, however, these courses are designed only for the full-time students. It is not possible for

people, who cannot devote their full time for education due to their employment or business, to join these courses.

- The traditional educational system requires very long period of time from students which is a discouraging factor for many of them. The curriculum should be flexible enough that every person should be able to acquire knowledge according to his/her needs, available time and intellectual capabilities. We do not mean that by offering such a flexible curriculum, every person would be able to become a top-notch religious scholar. Of course, a person targeting himself to excel in Islamic Studies, need ceaseless effort of several years to achieve the heights of Islamic Studies.

- Traditional education system is designed on generalized needs of students and specific problems of a student, his/her capabilities and circumstances are not taken into consideration.

- Traditional education system requires huge amount of investment in classrooms, offices, libraries and laboratories. On the top of that, cost of teachers and administrative staff requires immense amount of operating expenditure which often makes these institution unfeasible in financial terms. In modern times, it is possible to make an online educational institute with minimum investment requirement. The project that required millions of dollars before, can be completed in a few bucks now.

- Traditional education system requires presence of teachers and students at one place, which is not required in an online classroom setting. Now, the modern technology offers the flexibility to make teachers and students available in a virtual classroom while physically sitting in their homes.

Therefore, we need a new syllabus and educational system for Islamic Studies addressing the above-mentioned issues. Nonetheless, we admit that traditional education system is still very important and any system of virtual education cannot be a substitute of the traditional model. However, the opportunities produced by the information technology allow new possibilities which can make a virtual education system a supplement to the traditional one. Those people, who cannot afford to join the traditional system due to any reason, can receive religious education by the virtual educational system.

2. The Virtual Education System

In addition to teachers, an education system has three major components: Teaching methods; rules and regulations; and the curriculum. We shall discuss the first two in this section while a separate section is dedicated to the syllabus.

2.1. Teaching Methods

For religious education, we should adopt the same methods, which are used by all quality educational institutes around the world. The salient features of these methods are as follows:

- Text books will be written in a modern, easy and intelligible way that will help the students to grasp the concepts by reading.

- Teachers will deliver lectures with the help of audio-visual aids. These lectures will be made available to the students either in form of virtual classrooms or through recorded videos. Students will be encouraged to discuss their questions with the teachers.

- Class assignments will be designed in a way that they instigate creative abilities of the students. Instead of mere memorizing the content of a book, the students will be encouraged to understand and apply it appropriately in a creative manner.

- Teachers and students will be in touch with each other through email, phone, skype or any other communication tools.

- Case studies will be available to the students to apply the concepts studied during the course. Issues of daily life will be presented to them and they will be asked to resolve these problems in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. The students will be encouraged to engage in group discussions along with their teachers. This methodology will help students develop their creative and critical abilities.

- Beginners', intermediate and even advanced levels of each course will be available in English. The students will learn enough Arabic at these levels to continue their advanced studies.

- The syllabus will not be limited to the text books but the students will be provided with additional materials and bibliographies to enhance their level of knowledge.

- The examinations will be designed in a way that the students will not be able to write his/her memorized answers. The exam will test the creative abilities of students by applying the knowledge acquired.

- The entire syllabus will be formulated in a way that it will help the students in developing their personalities according to the ideal of Islam. "Purification of Souls" which is called *Tazkiyat un Nafs* in religious literature, will be the prime objective of this curriculum.

In this way, we shall develop an educational system for Islamic Studies that will help in producing extra-ordinary scholars of Islam. We emphasize again that this system will not be a substitute of the traditional education system but it will serve as a supplement to it by helping those people who are unable to join any traditional religious school or college.

2.2. Rules and Regulations

Following rules and regulations will be applicable to this program:

- The prime target of this program is to help those modern-educated people who are interested in religious studies. Moreover, existing students of religious seminaries, colleges and universities can also get benefit of this program because it will provide them a great help in understanding the concepts in an easy way. It will help them in passing their university exams and improving their skill level.

- Minimum entry requirements to join this course will be after secondary school. Potential students should be able to read either English or Urdu up to that extent that they can understand average books written in these languages.

- There is no minimum time limit to complete a module but the maximum limit to

complete a module is one year. This provides flexibility to the students to adjust their study plans according to their capabilities and available time.
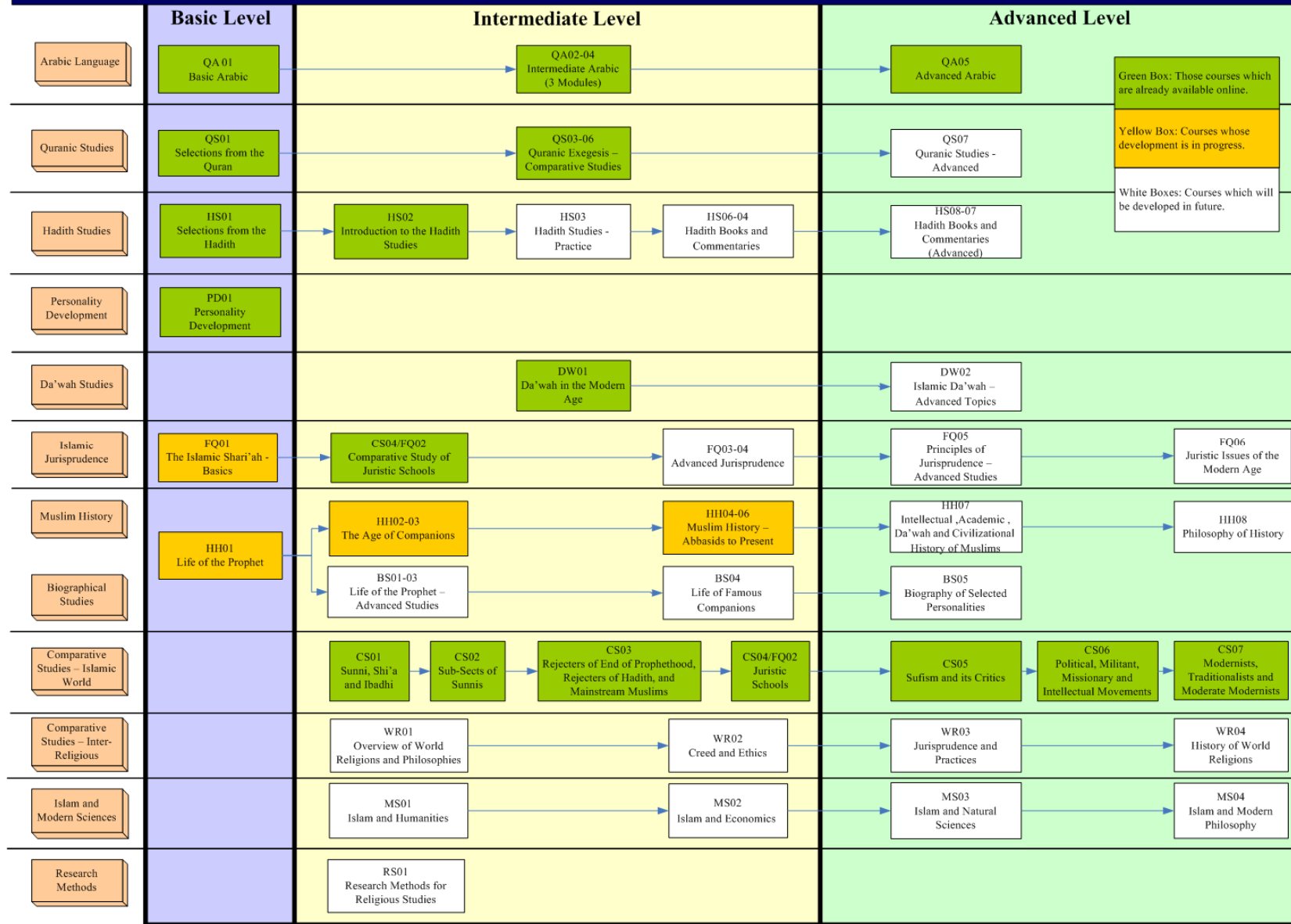
- No fees will be charged for this program. In order to build habit of spending in Allah's way, the students will be asked to pay an affordable amount to any needy person in their vicinity. This fees must be paid every month to a person who is not a professional beggar but genuinely deserves financial help.

- No discrimination will be allowed in this program on the basis of religion, race, color, area, sect etc. People belonging to all religions, sects, area and race will be highly welcomed to join. Non-Muslims, who are interested in learning about Islam, will be accepted gladly in the program.

- After completing studies, the student will register for an exam through email. The exam will be conducted in an open book format whose details will be available along with the study material.

- A student may claim exemption from a module. A detailed interview will be conducted with the student to grant him/her exemption.

- The students, who are not interested in all domains of knowledge, will be welcomed in the specific courses. However, some courses will be mandatory for all students.

3. The Curriculum

People who received modern education are interested in religious studies at different levels. Some students are interested only at beginners' level to practice religious directives in their routine life. Some students are interested in studies at intermediate level because they want to do missionary work, while a minority group want to learn the religion in depth. Some people are interested only in a specific domain. In order to address the needs of all of these segments, we have devised a flexible curriculum that is depicted in the diagram. The Islamic Studies Program will have 12 subjects or knowledge streams:

1. Arabic Language (including grammar and literature)
2. Quranic Studies
3. Hadith Studies
4. Personality Development
5. Islamic Jurisprudence
6. Muslim History
7. Biography of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), his Companions and selected Historical Personalities
8. Comparative Theology of different groups and sects within Muslims
9. World Religion and Philosophies
10. Da'wah (Missionary) Studies
11. Islam and Modern Sciences
12. Research Methods for Islamic Studies

Islamic Studies Program – The Syllabus

	Basic Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level	
Arabic Language	QA01 Basic Arabic	QA02-04 Intermediate Arabic (3 Modules)	QA05 Advanced Arabic	
Quranic Studies	QS01 Selections from the Quran	QS03-06 Quranic Exegesis – Comparative Studies	QS07 Quranic Studies - Advanced	
Hadith Studies	HS01 Selections from the Hadith	HS02 Introduction to the Hadith Studies / HS03 Hadith Studies - Practice / HS06-04 Hadith Books and Commentaries	HS08-07 Hadith Books and Commentaries (Advanced)	
Personality Development	PD01 Personality Development			
Da'wah Studies		DW01 Da'wah in the Modern Age	DW02 Islamic Da'wah – Advanced Topics	
Islamic Jurisprudence	FQ01 The Islamic Shari'ah - Basics	CS04/FQ02 Comparative Study of Juristic Schools / FQ03-04 Advanced Jurisprudence	FQ05 Principles of Jurisprudence – Advanced Studies / FQ06 Juristic Issues of the Modern Age	
Muslim History	HH01 Life of the Prophet	HH02-03 The Age of Companions / HH04-06 Muslim History – Abbasids to Present	HH07 Intellectual ,Academic , Da'wah and Civilizational History of Muslims / HH08 Philosophy of History	
Biographical Studies		BS01-03 Life of the Prophet – Advanced Studies / BS04 Life of Famous Companions	BS05 Biography of Selected Personalities	
Comparative Studies – Islamic World		CS01 Sunni, Shi'a and Ibadhi / CS02 Sub-Sects of Sunnis / CS03 Rejecters of End of Prophethood, Rejecters of Hadith, and Mainstream Muslims / CS04/FQ02 Juristic Schools	CS05 Sufism and its Critics / CS06 Political, Militant, Missionary and Intellectual Movements / CS07 Modernists, Traditionalists and Moderate Modernists	
Comparative Studies – Inter-Religious		WR01 Overview of World Religions and Philosophies / WR02 Creed and Ethics	WR03 Jurisprudence and Practices / WR04 History of World Religions	
Islam and Modern Sciences		MS01 Islam and Humanities / MS02 Islam and Economics	MS03 Islam and Natural Sciences / MS04 Islam and Modern Philosophy	
Research Methods		RS01 Research Methods for Religious Studies		

Green Box: Those courses which are already available online.

Yellow Box: Courses whose development is in progress.

White Boxes: Courses which will be developed in future.

Research Project

The subjects will be taught from beginners to advanced levels. Important issues will be discussed at length in the syllabus and students who want to specialize in a subject, can do so after completing the syllabus. The whole syllabus is depicted on the diagram.

3.1. Course Levels

The entire syllabus is divided into three levels to cater the needs of students having different aptitude and intellectual level.

- **Basic Level:** This is for beginners who want to learn the basics of religion in order to practice it. It is depicted in blue color in the diagram.
- **Intermediate Level:** Various modules are designed for the intermediate students who want to do missionary work but they do not have an aptitude for academics and research. It is shown in yellow background on the diagram.
- **Advanced Level:** The students who want to dedicate their lives for religious service and want to do missionary work at higher intellectual level can get benefit of advanced modules. The green color on the diagram depicts the advanced modules.

Every student can select the modules according to his/her requirements.

3.2. Arabic Language

In order to get access to the treasure trove of Islamic Studies, Arabic language is the key. The prime texts of Islam i.e. the Quran and the Hadith books are written in Arabic. Major part of Islamic literature, including the primeval books of each subject are in Arabic. The students of Islamic Studies are required to learn Arabic to an extent that (s)he should be able to understand the Quran and the Hadith directly. As it takes long time to learn a language, therefore, we advise our participants to start Arabic courses while studying other disciplines so that they can get a good command over Arabic while learning the concepts of other subjects in their mother tongue.

Under the umbrella of "Islamic Studies Program," the series of courses designed for Arabic is named as the "Quranic Arabic Program" because the language of the Quran is the prime focus of this course. However, it covers the language of Hadith and other religious books written in classic and mediaeval Arabic. At the end of this program, we shall be able to read Arabic books without help of an expert. The program is designed in a way that we shall easily learn the language of Islamic texts by following a step-by-step approach.

People learn Arabic due to two reasons: (1) To understand the Quran, the Hadith and Islamic literature; (2) To communicate with Arabs of modern age. This course is targeted to achieve the former objective, however, people aiming for developing their communication skills can also get benefit of this program. Due to its systematic nature, Arabic is one of the easiest languages in the world because it has well-defined rules and a highly sophisticated language structure. If you are familiar with the rules of Arabic Grammar, you can get a basic command over this language in a few weeks.

To understand the Quran and the Hadith, it is essential to learn the vocabulary used in the Quran, the Hadith and the Islamic literature. We will focus the linguistics, philology and figurative

speech of the Quran in this program.

Learning Arabic by using this program is very simple: Study one lesson daily; solve all the exercises provided under 'Test Yourself'; do not read the answers before attempting the questions and once you solve the exercises, compare your answers with the ones provided to you in the 'Answers Book'. In a few weeks, you will find that your comprehension skills are improving. You do not need to memorize vocabulary and grammar rules. The course is designed in a way that they will automatically become part of your memory.

The Program is organized as follows:

- **Module AR00:** The objective of this module is to enable you to read the Arabic script correctly.
- **Module AR01:** This module will enable you to understand the basic Arabic used in the routine life to perform basic religious rituals.
- **Module AR02:** This module is designed to improve your linguistic skills. You will learn basic rules of Arabic grammar i.e. *"I'lm un Nahv"* and enhance your vocabulary. After completing this module, you become able to understand 30-40% of the Islamic literature in Arabic with the help of a dictionary.
- **Module AR03:** This module will further raise the level of your skills. You will read advanced concepts of grammar especially *"I'lm us Sarf."* Your vocabulary will become vast and after completing this module, you will be able to understand 75-80% of the Islamic literature in Arabic by using a dictionary.
- **Module AR04:** After studying the advanced concepts of *I'lm us Sarf* and *I'lm un Nahv* at this level, you will complete your studies of Arabic Grammar. At completion of this level, you will be able to read 100% of the Islamic literature in Arabic with the help of a dictionary.
- **Module AR05:** It is the last module of this program. You study the advanced concepts of *"I'lm ul Balaghah"* (the art of eloquence) at this level. At the end of this module, you will be able to understand the fine literary concepts in the Arabic language. It will enable you to understand the Islamic literature in Arabic without consulting a dictionary frequently.

Module AR01 – AR05 are divided into two streams. 'A' series deal with the rules of Arabic Grammar and Linguistics. Enough exercises are provided to you to learn the principles of grammar and eloquence.

The objective of 'B' Series is to build your vocabulary. Passages from the Quran, the Hadith and selected writings of Arab scholars are provided to you. You will have to learn the words and styles and then translate the passages into English. You need not to cram these words becaues the lessons and the exercises are designed in a way that you will automatically learn the grammar rules, words and Arabic styles.

The program is basically designed to teach you comprehension in the Arabic language. It is not designed to teach you day-to-day conversation or writing in the Arabic language, but it will work as a support in achieving these objectives, if you want to pursue another course of Arabic

writing and conversation. You need an Arabic speaking environment as well as a teacher to achieve these two objectives.

3.3. Quranic Studies

As Muslims, all of us believe that the Quran is the final book of God. Millions of Muslims memorize this book completely and almost every Muslim learns at least some part of the Quran. The majority of them recite it regularly and especially during the holy month of Ramadan, almost all of them develop a strong relation with this book.

Traditionally, Non-Arab Muslims widely recite the Quran without understanding its meaning. We read the Quran for the sake of reward in the Hereafter but ignore the morality and character advised by it, and due to this, we often deviate from the right path suggested by it. Many people read the Quran but sell their souls to Satan by not following its message. Thank God that this attitude is now changing. Educated Muslim youth is returning towards the Quran. Not only Muslims, but also many Non-Muslims are inclined to read this book which has changed the lives of millions.

A simple method for the Non-Arabs to understand the Quran is to start reading its translation. It is an effective approach for those who just want to get some familiarity with its content. But people, who want to dedicate their lives for missionary service of Islam, need extensive study of the Quran and the domains related to it like Hadith, Jurisprudence, History, Ethics, Philosophy and Theology. This program is designed for such people.

In order to fit the needs of students who want to study the Quran with different perspectives, the program has been divided into seven modules. The detail of such levels is as follows:

- **Module QS01:** This module is for the beginners. We shall study some selected passages from the Quran and perform some intellectual and practical work on them. At completion of this module, we will be familiar with the message of the Quran and obtain a lot of background information required to study the Quran. In addition, we will also try to transform our personalities according to the Quranic ideals.
- **Module QS02 --- QS06:** These five modules are for intermediate students. We shall conduct a comparative study of certain famous Quranic Commentaries written in English. At completion of this level, we will have studied the Quran extensively by encompassing all significant matters in the Quranic Studies. We will continue to purify our souls in the light of the Quran at these levels.
- **Module QS07:** It is designed for advanced students who want to become specialists in Quranic Studies. Advanced issues related to the Quranic language, exegesis, hermeneutics, interpretation, jurisprudence, history etc. will be discussed at this level. The questions raised by some Non-Muslim scholars about the Quran will also be studied in this module. The process of soul-purification will continue for the rest of our lives.

Objectives of This Program

The objectives of this program are as follows:

- To study the entire content of the Quran.

- To conduct a comparative study of the Quranic Exegeses.
- To transform our personality according to the Quranic ideals.
- To study the important intellectual and practical issues related to the Quranic teachings.
- To acquaint us with the styles of Quranic expressions.
- To get background information about the Quranic contents.
- To understand how the exegetes from different background understand the Quran.

Study Methodology

Various research studies in the area of cognitive learning reveal that people remember 30-40% of what they listen or read, 60-70% of what they observe and 80-90% of what they experience. Therefore, we have tried to adopt a practice-based learning approach in this program. We are going to do some practical work on the Quran with the perspective that the message of the Quran lands directly into our heart and becomes a part of our personality.

Two commentaries have been selected in order to give you an idea about looking at the Quran from different perspectives. In addition, specific discourses for a third commentary have been added. An introduction to the exegeses under study is as follows:

- **Muhammad Asad** (formerly Leopold Weiss 1900-1992): He was an Austrian Jewish scholar reverted to Islam. His English commentary is abridged but completely conveys the message of Islam. He has also addressed the modern intellectual issues. Since he was a former Jewish scholar, therefore, he has conducted a nice comparative study of the Quran with the Torah.
- **Abul A'ala Mawdudi** (1903-1979): His original work is in Urdu but it was translated in English and Arabic. He considered Islam as a comprehensive movement whose objectives were to establish God's rule on the earth, a theme widely is reflected in his commentary. He can be called as the main promoter of "Political Movement of Islam" during the 20th century. His exegesis is one of the most popular ones in India, Pakistan, Egypt and other countries of the world. Mawdudi also addressed the modern intellectual issues in detail.
- **Muhammad Hussain Al-Tabatabi** (1904-1981): He was one of the most prominent Iranian Shiite exegetes who wrote a detailed commentary in which he discussed the modern intellectual issues in detail. We have included his specific essays on certain intellectual issues from his commentary because his work is very detailed and it is not possible to cover that within the scope of this course.

The objective of selecting these exegeses is to study the Quran from different angles. In addition to these commentaries, we shall provide you with workbooks to study all the exegeses in a systematic manner. Currently, six of the above-mentioned modules are available and we are working on the seventh module which will include various philosophical, structural, historical, linguistic and socio-economic issues related to the Quran. We shall also study different approaches of the Quranic hermeneutics in depth.

3.4. Hadith Studies

In addition to the Quran, the "*Sunnah*" of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the second source of religious doctrines and directives in Islam and its details are available in the vast collection of *Hadith*. A *Hadith* (plural *Ahadith*) is a report including a saying or practice of the Prophet. We find answers of various questions e.g., How did the Prophet understand and interpret the Quran? How did he institutionalize the practice of the Quran? How did he address to the questions of religious and moral nature? We have divided this stream into eight modules:

- **Module HS01:** This module is for beginners and its objective is to introduce the students with the format and content of the Hadith. We shall study a collection of Ahadith primarily focusing on morality and character building. Certain psychological, social and practical assignments will be provided to the students to build their character according to the guidance provided by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

- **Module HS02:** It is designed for the intermediate students. Unfortunately, some people in the initial centuries fabricated fake Ahadith to meet their political and sectarian objectives. Hadith experts devised certain procedures to differentiate between fake and real Ahadith. We shall study these procedures in this module.

- **Module HS03:** In this module, we shall take a sample of Ahadith and apply the concepts studied in HS02. At the end of this module, we shall be able to conduct research on authenticity of any Hadith.

- **Module HS04 --- HS08:** Entire collection of Ahadith is very big and it contains more than 150 books written during 2nd and 3rd centuries Hijra (8th and 9th centuries CE); therefore, it is not possible to study this entire collection in a course. We shall read a selection from different books of Hadith along with their commentaries in these five modules.

The first two modules are available now and the rest of modules are under preparation.

3.5. Personality Development

This stream aims to develop our personalities in the light of the Quran, the glorious and fine example of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and the ethical values promoted by all divine religions including Islam. We will attempt to develop and enhance the positive attributes in our personalities and at the same time try to get rid of our negative aspects. Personality development is described in the Quran as the primary objective of religion, and. Allah, the Almighty says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا. وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا.

The human personality witnesses, and Him Who perfected it. And inspired it with knowledge of what is wrong for it and what is right for it: Indeed successful will be the one who purifies it, and indeed failure will be the one who corrupts it! (Al Shams 91:6-10)

God created this world for a specific test of human beings: Purification of their souls' which is another name of 'personality development'. The person, who purifies his /her personality from
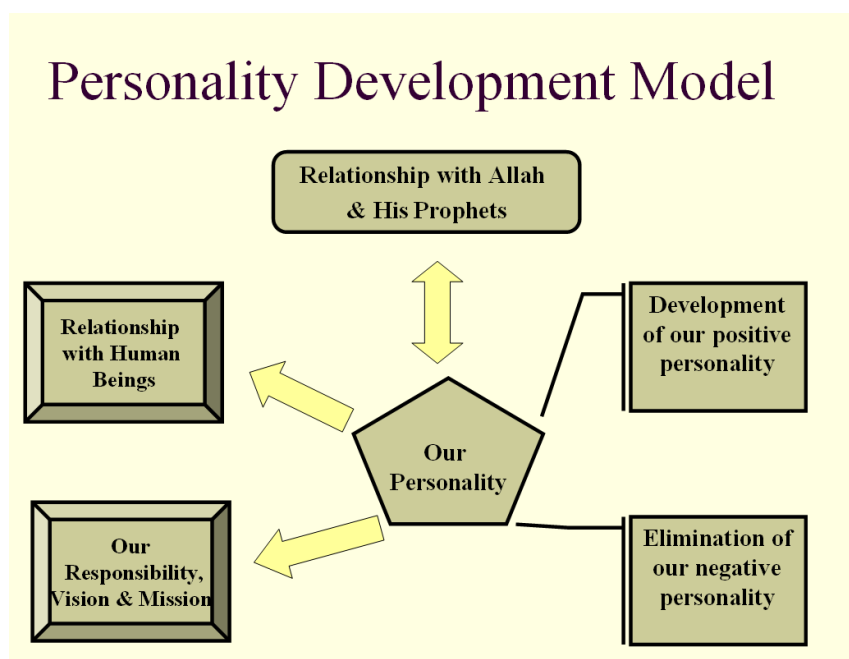
moral filth, will be successful in both this test world and the real world, which is the hereafter. On the contrary, the one, who fails to do this, will not prosper in any of these worlds.

This program targets an audience of both Muslims and Non-Muslims. The message of the Quran does not discriminate between humans but invites everyone to understand this message regardless of his race, color, caste, nation or creed and after that; they are free to choose whatever path they like.

We continuously add new materials including essays, articles, books and audio/video lectures to the course content every month.

Personality Development Model

The model we have adopted for personality development is depicted in the following diagram.

Personality Development Model

Relationship with Allah & His Prophets

Relationship with Human Beings

Development of our positive personality

Our Personality

Our Responsibility, Vision & Mission

Elimination of our negative personality

This model of personality development contains five units. The heart of any personality development system is the 'correct relationship with the Almighty God and His prophets' which is described in Unit I of this program. Without such connection, it is not possible to develop a proper personality and a moral character.

Personality Development has two aspects: eliminating the negative aspects of one's personality and developing the positive ones. These two aspects are described in Unit II and III respectively. Unit IV is about person-to-person relationship which is "human rights". Islam has defined the rights of other creatures e.g. animals which are also included in Unit IV. The last unit of this series is development of our vision and the role we have to play for development of a morally-conscious global society.

A few questions are made available at the end of each essay. You are requested to think about them and share your views, experience and knowledge with other participants of this program. You are free to think in an open manner and criticize the views presented by the author. In addition, a series of lectures and presentations is being recorded and will be made available soon for the benefit of all participants.

On the top of that, if you are facing any problem related to your personality development, feel free to contact. Your personal information will be kept confidential.

3.6. Islamic Jurisprudence

When the directives of the Quran and the Sunnah are applied on a situation of our practical life, the discipline of *I'lm ul Fiqh* or Islamic Jurisprudence come into existence. The jurisprudence includes religious law about worship, society, economy, polity, peace and war, and international relations. This stream is divided into the following modules:

- **Module FQ01:** It is for beginners and we shall study the religious directives about our daily life in it. Basic directives about ritual purification, prayer, fasting, mandatory charity, pilgrimage, family life and business will be discussed in this module.
- **Module FQ02:** This module is aimed for intermediate students and we shall study the views of different juristic schools including Hanafi, Maliki, Shafe'i, Hanbali, Ja'afari, Zaidi and Ibadhi. In the first part, we shall study the detailed directives (*furu'*) while in the second part, we shall get examine the juristic procedures (*Usul ul Fiqh*) adopted by the schools.
- **Module FQ03-05:** In these modules, we shall conduct in depth comparative studies of different juristic schools about laws related to worship, business, agriculture, politics, international affairs and other juristic fields. We shall not only discuss the views but also study the argumentation provided by the great jurists of past and present. Our prime focus will be on the issues that carry great significance in the modern times.
- **Module FQ06:** This module is dedicated to an in-depth study of juristic procedures and their history. We shall study in depth that what principle are applicable to understand the Quran and the Sunnah. How should the procedures of *Ijma'* (consensus), *Qiyaas* (juristic analogy), *Istihsan* (juristic preference), *Masaleh* (public interest), *Sadd Dharai'* (preventive measures), and *A'ql* (common sense) are applied? You will become an expert in jurisprudence at the end of this module.

This stream is not yet available and we are working on preparation these modules.

3.7. Da'wah Studies

Da'wah means missionary and educational work for Islam. It is the prime objective of religious studies and all Islamic scholars are required to convey the message of God to their respective target audience. We shall study the strategies and tactics of Da'wah in this stream which includes two modules:

- **Module DW01**: This is a basic module that includes the significance of Da'wah work, character of the missionaries, planning for Da'wah work and preparing a Da'wah message.
- **Module DW02:** This module is for advanced students and we shall study the strategies and tactics for Da'wah in special reference to the modern age. How to use the inventions of the modern science like television, the internet etc. in Da'wah work? How to approach different segments of society like modern educated people, business executives,

politicians, blue-collar workers, house wives and children to convey the message of God? What are common mistakes of missionaries? What are the challenges to the Da'wah work in near future? We shall address these questions in this module and conduct case studies for the methodologies adopted by different missionary organizations and individuals.

The first module is available now but the second is yet in its planning phase.

3.8. Muslim History

According to a Spanish philosopher George Santanya: *"Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it."* We must study our history in detail and learn lessons to build our future. Usually, history is taught in colleges and universities in a descriptive way but we shall study it with the perspective of learning lessons. The program is divided into the following modules:

- **Module HH01:** We shall study the biography of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in this module which not only contains his biography but also provides details about initiation and evolution of the Muslim community.
- **Module HH02:** This module is about history of the companions of the Prophet which also includes the Ummayad period spanning from 11/632 to 133/750. We shall study in this module the details of expansion of Islam from a city of Madina to the world's largest empire stretching from India in east and Spain in west.
- **Module HH03:** When a student reads the history of the age of companions, several questions arise in his mind especially about the period starting from the martyrdom of the third caliph U'thman (35/656) to the martyrdom of the seventh caliph Ibn Zubair (73/696.) We shall try to find the answers of these questions in this module. Moreover, we shall learn the techniques of historical criticism at this level. These three module will be common in historical and biographical studies.
- **Module HH04 --- HH06:** In these three modules, we shall study the political history of the Muslim world from the early Abbasid period (133/750) to the modern times (1400s/2000s.) We shall examine the positive and dark aspects of the Muslim history and learn lessons from them.
- **Module HH07:** Syllabuses of history taught at different colleges and universities focus only on political history but religious, academic, intellectual, social, economic and cultural aspects of history carry more importance. In this module, we shall study the Muslim history from these perspectives and examine the evolution of the Islamic civilization. In addition to the study of past, we shall assess the present situation of Muslims along with its future aspects.

The first six modules are almost prepared while work on the seventh module is yet at initial stages.

3.9. Biographical Studies

Biographical studies will contain the biographies of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), his companions and

selected historical personalities. In order to understand the evolution of the Muslims from advent of Islam to the modern times, biographical studies contain the most important information. The stream is divided into the following modules:

- **Module HH01-03:** We shall study the biography of the Prophet and his rightly-guided caliphs in these modules. These three modules are common in "Muslim History" and "Biographical Studies" streams of this program because advanced modules of both disciplines are dependent upon them.

- **Module BS01-03:** Different aspects of the biography of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) will be studied in these modules and try to obtain the answers of several questions including: What was the situation of the world in pre-Islamic era and what was the contribution of the Prophet to humanity? What were the key attributes in the personality of the Prophet that changed the world? What biographical information about the Prophet is available in the Quran? What role did the Prophet play as a teacher, mentor, psychologist, administrator and military commander? What objections did non-Muslim scholars raise on the biography of the Prophet and what are their answers?

- **Module BS04:** We shall study the biographies of selected companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in this module. The history of their sacrifices for Islam and their role in transforming the world will be discussed in this module in depth.

- **Module BS05:** This module will contain the biographies of selected people in the Muslim history who significantly affected the course of history from political, social, economic, academic or reformative perspectives. We shall also study the biographies of those persons who affected the course of history in a negative way and caused harm to Islam and Muslims. Their personality traits that shaped the course of history will be analyzed.

- **Module BS06:** This will be the last module of this series which will contain the technical details of different disciplines related to biographical studies.

All of these modules are in our long-term plan.

3.10. Comparative Theology

We can call this stream as "Modern Islamic Theology." Various sects, sub-sects and groups could be found in the Muslim world who disagree with each other on certain doctrinal or theo-juristic issues. We shall conduct a study of these groups and their views in an impartial way and compare their arguments with each other. The stream is divided into seven modules:

- **Module CS01:** This module will encompass the Sunni, Shi'ite and Ibadhi sects. Views of sub-sects and splinter groups of Shi'a and Kharijite sects will also be studied in this module.

- **Module CS02:** Doctrinal issues of the sub-sects of Sunnis will be studied in this module which include Salafis, Traditionalists and non-sectarian Muslims.

- **Module CS03:** Views of some fringe groups will be studied in this module who disagree with the mainstream Muslims on some most significant issues e.g. end of prophethood and rejection of the Sunnah as a source of religion.

- **Module CS04:** It will contain a comparative study of different juristic schools and will be a common module in juristic and comparative studies.
- **Module CS05:** This module will be dedicated for comparative studies of the views of different Sufi (mystic) groups and their critics.
- **Module CS06:** Different political, militant, missionary and intellectual movements of the Muslim world will be studied in this module. We shall compare their views, history and impact on the Muslim world and will examine the criticism on such movements.
- **Module CS07:** Modern age has created several intellectual, cultural, economic, legal and social issues for Muslims and as a result, three groups have emerged in their intellectual circles called traditionalists, modernists and moderates. We shall compare their views and arguments in this module.

All of these modules are under preparation.

3.11. World Religions and Philosophies

The students of Islamic studies should be aware of other religions so that they would be able to present their message to them on common grounds. This stream is divided into the following modules:

- **Module WR01:** This module will contain the basic information about the world religions included Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Atheism and others. We shall get the basic information about their origin, basic doctrines, history and key texts.
- **Module WR02:** Advanced studies about world religions on theological and moral issues will be conducted in this module that will contain detailed information about the doctrines and argumentation of each religion on selected issues. Sects of different religions will also be discussed. Moreover, study of sacred texts e.g. the Bible, the Gita etc. will be part of this module.
- **Module WR03:** This module will be dedicated to the study of practical aspects of different religions. Their laws about worship, society, economy, polity etc. will be discussed in this module.
- **Module WR04:** A comparative study of the political, academic, intellectual, anthropological and missionary history of world religions will be conducted in this module.
- **Module WR05:** We shall study Orientalism in this module and discuss the questions raised by the non-Muslim scholars on Islam.

All of these modules are not yet prepared and are included in the long-term plan of Islamic Studies Program.

3.12. Islam and Modern Sciences

Modern sciences have created many opportunities and challenges for Islamic *Da'wah*, and in order to understand such opportunities and challenges, basics of these sciences should be studied. This stream is divided into the following modules:

- **Module MS01:** This module will contain the concepts of social sciences and humanities (e.g. sociology, anthropology, psychology etc.) that are directly linked with the Da'wah of Islam in a positive or negative way.
- **Module MS02:** It will contain the concepts of economics that are directly linked with Islam. Developments in economics, banking, insurance, currency and corporate finance has raised various challenges for Islam which will be part of this module.
- **Module MS03:** Research in natural sciences like physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy etc. has created several opportunities and challenges for all religions including Islam. For example, if the Darwin's theory has raised questions on religious perspective about origin of man, research on human body has made it easy to understand the Divine Wisdom. We shall discuss these concepts in this module.
- **Module MS04:** Philosophical movements of modernism and post-modernism will be discussed in this module and philosophical issues related to Islam will be studied here.

Preparation of all of these modules is included in the long-term plan of the Islamic Studies Program.

3.13. Research Methods for Religious Studies

This stream will contain only one module in which we shall discuss the research methods used in religious studies. Impartial research, textual analysis, logical fallacies, deduction and induction etc. will be discussed in this module. Moreover, we shall study the method of writing research papers and books in this module.

3.14. Research Project

At the end of studies, students will be required to write a research thesis on a selected topic. This will help him/her in developing the research skills.

4. Project Progress, Statistics and Team

4.1. Project Progress

The project was started in Sep 2008 and the progress of this project until August 2012 is as follows:

Knowledge Stream	Total Modules	Available Modules		Progress	
		English	**Urdu**	**English**	**Urdu**
Arabic Language	5	5	5	100%	100%
Quranic Studies	7	6	6	86%	86%
Hadith Studies	8	0	2	0%	25%
Personality Development	2	½	1	25%	50%
Islamic Jurisprudence	6	0	0	0%	0%

Knowledge Stream	Total Modules	Available Modules		Progress	
		English	Urdu	English	Urdu
Da'wah Studies	2	0	1	0%	50%
Muslim History	7	0	0	0%	0%
Biographical Studies	6	0	0	0%	0%
Comparative Studies	7	0	7	0%	100%
World Religions	5	0	0	0%	0%
Islam and Modern Sciences	4	0	0	0%	0%
Research Methods	1	0	0	0%	0%

4.2. Project Timeline

The timeline of the project is as follows:

July 2008	Start of work
July 2008	Launching of HS02 (Hadith Studies) and DW01 (Da'wah Studies)
Oct 2008	Launching of PD01 (Personality Development)
Apr 2010	Launching of the Quranic Arabic (five modules)
Aug 2011	Launching of the Quranic Studies (six modules)
Aug 2011	Start of student registration
Dec 2011	Launching of Comparative Studies (seven modules)
Sep 2012	Launching of Muslim History (six modules), *in sha Allah*
Oct 2012	Launching of a dedicated website for the project, *in sha Allah*
Dec 2018	Expected completion of the project, *in sha Allah*

4.3. Project Statistics

Important statistics about the project are as follows:

4.3.1 Registered Participants (Aug 2011 to Aug 2012)

No. of Participants	206
Level of commitment	Very active: 10%. Moderately active: 21%. Occasional Readers: 69%
Gender	Male: 90%. Female: 10%

Educational Background	Modern Educated: 88%. Islamic Studies students in universities: 6%. Seminary Students: 6%
Educational Level	Under graduate: 24%. Graduate: 38%. Post Graduate: 35%. Doctorate: 3%
Profession	Professionals: 52%. Students: 22%. Academicians: 11%. Others: 15%
Country	Pakistan: 58%. India: 10%. Saudi Arabia: 8%. UAE: 5%. Australia: 3%. England: 3%. Others: 13%
City	Karachi: 19%. Lahore: 9%. Islamabad: 4%. Jeddah, Hyderabad Sindh, Dubai, Multan (each): 3%
Association	Unassociated: 64%. Deobandi: 13%. Salafi: 10%. Farahi School: 4%. Barelvi: 2%. Shi'a: 1%. Political Islamic Movements: 6%. Non-Muslims: 0.5%
Courses	Arabic: 15%. Quranic Studies: 28%. Comparative Studies: 35%. Da'wah Studies: 4%. Personality Development: 12%. (registration is required only for Quranic and Comparative Studies.)

4.3.2: Download Statistics

Course	Period	Statistics	Monthly Average
Quranic Arabic	Apr 2010 – May 2012	Urdu: 145,238. English: 51,168	Urdu: 5,586. English: 1,968
Quranic Studies*	Aug 2011 – May 2012	Urdu: 6,677 English: 1,394	Urdu: English:
Hadith Studies	July 2008 – May 2012	Urdu: 17,488	Urdu: 372
Comparative Studies*	Dec 2011 – May 2012	Urdu: 7,711	Urdu: 1,285
Da'wah Studies	July 2008 – May 2012	Urdu: 7,156	Urdu: 152
Personality Development	Oct 2008 – May 2012	Urdu: 290,412 English: 67,716	Urdu: 6,600 English: 1,539
Quranic Studies and Comparative Studies are available only for the registered participants, therefore, the number of downloads is less. Some courses are yet available in Urdu only.			

4.4. Project Team

Following persons are working on the project:

1. Professor Muhammad Aqil, an academician of social sciences, is from Karachi, Pakistan and his area of specialization is personality development.

2. Muhammad Javed Akhtar is from Gujranawala, Pakistan. He is a geologist by profession and working in an oil company at Qatar. He has prepared the first module of Hadith

Studies.

3. Muhammad Shakil is from Okara, Pakistan. He is a graduate from a religious seminary and working on initial module of Islamic Jurisprudence.

4. Hafiz Muhammad Shariq is based at Karachi, Pakistan. He is a research scholar and his area of interest is world religions.

5. Khawaja Salman Hamid is a from Lahore, Pakistan and taking care of technical issues. He has developed the dedicated website of this project i.e. www.islamic-studies.info.

6. Sister Fatima Saem is based at Dubai, UAE and contributing through her writings on personality development and theology.

7. Muhammad Mubashir Nazir, is based at Jeddah and is overall responsible for all matters of this program. Major modules of Quranic Arabic, Quranic Studies, Hadith Studies, Comparative Studies and Muslim History are developed by him.