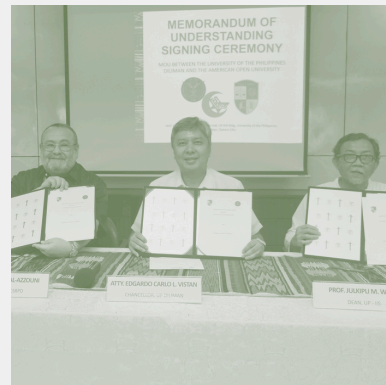




University of the Philippines-Diliman
INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

PROCEEDINGS

Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an



May 23, 2024
Room 300, Virata Hall, UP ISSI bldg.,
University of the Philippines,
Diliman, Quezon City



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| About the Proceedings | 01 |
| PART 1: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNING CEREMONY | |
| Welcome Remarks Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi Dean, UP Institute of Islamic Studies | 02 |
| Message Atty. Edgardo Carlo L. Vistan II Chancellor, University of the Philippines Diliman | 03 |
| PART 2: SEMINAR ON HUMANITY AND THE QUR'AN | |
| Lecture 1: Paradigm of Reforming Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni President, International Center for Social Research, Peace and Development | 04 |
| Lecture 2: Humanity and the Qur'an Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa Head of Qur'an Research, International Center for Social Research, Peace and Development | 06 |
| Question and Answer Forum | 08 |
| Closing Remarks Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi | 13 |
| Photo Documentation | 15 |



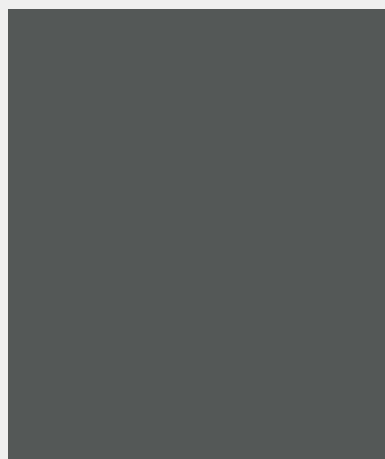
About the Proceedings

These are the proceedings of the "Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an," held on May 23, 2024, in Room 300, Virata Hall, UP ISSI Building, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City. The seminar aimed to highlight the relevance of the Qur'an as a comprehensive guide for humanity. Additionally, it provided a platform for attendees to engage in fruitful discourse with resource persons from the International Center for Social Research, Peace and Development (ICSRPD) and faculty members from the UP Institute of Islamic Studies (UP IIS).

The seminar was attended by students from UP IIS, the UP Muslim Students' Association, seminarians from the Xavierian Missionaries, Asatidz from the Islamic Studies Call and Guidance, and officers from the Philippine Coast Guard.

The seminar was organized by the UP Institute of Islamic Studies in collaboration with the International Center for Social Research, Peace, and Development.

ICSRPD President Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni and ICSRPD Qur'an Researcher Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa served as resource persons on topics related to humanity and the holy Qur'an. The Research, Publication, and Extension Division (RPED) documented the event and authored these proceedings.



Part 1

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNING CEREMONY

Welcome Remarks

Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi

Dean, UP Institute of Islamic Studies

Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi, Dean of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies (UP IIS), delivered the welcome remarks during the first part of the event, the Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony. Prof. Wadi began by acknowledging the presence of UP Diliman Chancellor Atty. Edgardo Carlo L. Vistan II; President of the International Center for Social Research, Peace and Development (ICSRPD) and Board of Trustee of the American Open University, Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni; Qur'an Researcher of ICSRPD, Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa; as well as other guests and friends.

Prof. Wadi shared that the Institute has been working on expanding its linkages with local and international partners. This effort includes the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between UP Diliman and the American Open University. Additional MOUs will be established with academic institutions in Indonesia and Malaysia, namely the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and the Maqasid Institute. These initiatives are part of the Institute's preparation for strengthening its networks with universities and institutions locally and internationally, in anticipation of its move to the New Institute of Islamic Studies Complex, expected to complete in early 2025. The Institute is also enhancing its programs and activities.

Prof. Wadi expressed his gratitude to Chancellor Vistan for his continuous and active support of all the Institute's endeavors. In his concluding message, he mentioned that the Institute looks forward to engaging with various academic institutions, given the support it receives from Chancellor Vistan and UP System President Atty. Angelo Jimenez. Prof. Wadi noted that the Institute is fortunate to have the overwhelming support of the current administration. Capitalizing on this support, the Institute will present its Vision 2030—a seven-year plan comprising various programs, projects, and activities.



Prof. Wadi also explained that the event included two parts: the MOU signing and the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an. With Engr. Al-Azzouni and Ustadh Eissa currently in the Philippines, the Institute took the opportunity to organize the seminar, which has also been held in many Islamic institutions affiliated with the World Assembly of Muslim League, covering topics related to humanity and the Holy Qur'an.

Message

Atty. Edgardo Carlo L. Vistan II
Chancellor, University of the Philippines Diliman

Atty. Edgardo Carlo L. Vistan, Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Diliman, began his message by greeting the visitors of the event, specifically acknowledging Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni and Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa. Atty. Vistan formally welcomed both to the University of the Philippines Diliman campus. He also recognized Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi, Dean of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies, along with the guests, students, and participants of the event, thanking them for attending the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an. The seminar aims to highlight the relevance of the Qur'an as a comprehensive guide to humanity, he explained. Atty. Vistan expressed his appreciation for the seminar's topic, emphasizing its importance and congratulating the UP IIS for organizing it, thereby extending the reach of Islamic Studies beyond the classroom. He underscored the significance of understanding one of the most revered books, the Holy Qur'an.

He noted the milestone in the history of the UP IIS, specifically its efforts to expand its linkages by officially partnering with other institutions worldwide. The event marked the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of the Philippines and the American Open University. Atty. Vistan, as Chancellor of UP Diliman, and Engr. Al-Azzouni, representing the American Open University, formalized this partnership. He also mentioned the possibility of further expanding this collaboration by introducing AOU to Dr. Melinda Bandalaria, Chancellor of UP Open University, another constituent university within the UP System.

In the concluding part of his message, Atty. Vistan highlighted the exciting developments for UP through the Institute of Islamic Studies. He congratulated Prof. Wadi on the newly forged partnership and thanked the ICSRPD and the American Open University for joining the UP Diliman and UP Institute of Islamic Studies family. He ended his message with a greeting, "Mabuhay po kayong lahat, long happiness and long fulfillment in life."



Part 2

Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an

Lecture 1: Paradigm of Reforming

Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni

President, International Center for Social Research, Peace and Development

Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni, President of the International Center for Social Research, Peace, and Development (ICSRPD), started his talk with a short prayer and an Islamic greeting. He then expressed his deep appreciation of UP Diliman and even considered it his second home.

Engr. Al-Azzouni then started his presentation on "Paradigm of Reforming." Highlighting the huge influence of Western paradigms in the world today, he believed that Islam has something to offer in terms of "paradigm shift." Supplementing his point with Surah An-Nahl (The Bee), the 16th chapter of the Qur'an, in verse 125 that says "Invite all to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord alone knows best who has strayed from His Way and who is rightly guided," he emphasized the word "wisdom" (hikmah).

In line with paradigm-shifting, Engr. Al-Azzouni believed that applying "wisdom" in the Qur'anic sense has to do with understanding first the Qur'an with internalization and then applying that understanding in the society for the welfare of the people. However, he believed that in amplifying such understanding, one must be aware that Muslims are of four kinds—(1) Those who do not care to know more but are easily attracted to extremism; (2) Those with little knowledge but act as theologians; (3) Those with knowledge but detached from the reality on the ground; and (4) Those with knowledge and feels the people on the ground. He said that good partners in the realization of successful paradigm shifting are this fourth kind of people.

To provide a historical background for his discourse, he continued by discussing Philippine history. He mentioned how the "Western paradigm" used religion to veer the minds of most Filipinos in accepting colonization. Capitalizing the Qur'anic paradigm as opposite to that of the Western paradigm, he shared that there was no indication of colonization during the Islamization process in the Philippines in spite that it was the period of the superpower Ottoman Empire (1299-1922). While few foreign Muslims arrived in the South to propagate Islam, most of them were just simple traders, he continued.

Shifting to Muslim history in general, he shared that non-Muslim writers would only focus on the negative sides and neglect most if not all of the great contributions of

Muslims to world civilization. Sharing the case of Umar Ibn al-Khattab's leadership, he mentioned that non-Muslim communities who were incorporated into the larger Muslim community "non-colonially" were relatively free and enjoying their abundance based on the Qur'anic paradigm.

More on the issue of "paradigm," Engr. Al-Azzouni shared the ideas of Malik Bennabi, a distinguished Algerian Muslim scholar who promoted that every person lives in three kinds of world—the world of ideas (source of norms, standards, values), the world of people (has to do with relationships among people), and the world of materials (has to do with civilization). He relates it further to the case of Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) where everything started with the "world of ideas" (Qur'anic paradigm) which led to the "world of people" (Prophet's family and companions) and finally the "world of materials" (Islamic civilization that leads the world more or less than 1000 years).

Applying Bennabi's ideas to the recent condition of the Muslim world, Engr. Al-Azzouni believed that its "world of ideas" was generally corrupted. Nowadays, he continued, fellow Muslims debate over trivial matters and what is supposed to be "mean" becomes their "end"—for instance, money becomes an "end" instead of just being a "mean" to help others as an "end." In this case, the "world of people" experiences disunity, the Muslims are divided and finally the "world of materials" becomes insignificant due to the lack of positive contribution to the current world civilization.

With Bennabi's ideas as his point of reference, Engr. Al-Azzouni highlighted the state of the Western paradigm. According to him, due to a man-made code of conduct and laws, despite having a morally corrupted "world of ideas" and "world of people" in the spiritual sense, the Western paradigm is very progressive in the "world of materials." Supporting his observation, Engr. Al-Azzouni mentioned how the West capitalized on its philosophy of Humanism in all aspects of life. This leads, however, to an imbalance in the expression of human ideals as it is divorced from spiritual values, he added.

As he continued the lecture, he shared the reasons why the West wanted others to adopt its paradigm—(1) They are one huge market, (2) They are cheap workers, and (3) They are rich in natural resources (All are indicators of "neocolonialism").



He then shared that the Qur'an is the only source of inspiration that can challenge the Western paradigm and that this is the main reason why the latter hated Islam so much.

He also explained how modern Muslims could eschew Western paradigms in their midst and successfully imbue their life with the Qur'anic paradigm in the process. To do so, he said that Muslims must: (1) Redefine their values—critically reflecting the values using the Qur'anic paradigm; and (2) Transfer the values to the system—applying values in all aspects of life. Thus, for him, a Muslim scholar who claims to be right and criticizes another for being wrong is not a real Muslim scholar.

Before ending his presentation, he mentioned that the Qur'anic paradigm is not a monopoly of the Muslims as it can apply to others. It is like the case of applying "best practices" from different sources, he continued. According to him, his non-Muslim friends even sought "Islamic advice" from him. At one point, he also wrote a speech on marriage delivered by his pastor friend in their congregation, and the latter was invited to other congregations for the same speech.

Lecture 2: Humanity and the Qur'an

Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa

Head of Qur'an Research, International Center
for Social Research, Peace and Development

Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa, the Qur'an Researcher of the International Center for Social Research, Peace, and Development (ICSRPD), used Arabic as his medium of communication during the entire session, and Engr. Al-Azzouni served as his translator. He started his talk with a short prayer and an Islamic greeting. He proceeded to thank everyone for attending the program. He then continued by saying that since it was his first time talking at the Institute of Islamic Studies at UP Diliman, it is proper to start with a topic on the Qur'an, the main source of anything Islamic. According to him, the Qur'an mentions itself in more than 500 verses concerning humanity and how the latter may change its condition.

Continuing his lecture, he mentioned that there are three objectives for why the Qur'an is revealed—(1) Guiding people to the straight path; (2) Taking people from darkness into light; and (3) Worshipping Allah alone. As far as the first objective is concerned, Ustadh Eissa shared that the Qur'an speaks of "guidance" in the "present tense" and in the Arabic language it would mean "continuity"—from the past to the future or anytime and anywhere. He further emphasized that there are many verses on "guidance" in the Qur'an. The Qur'an as guidance is cited therein in two distinct ways—(1) Specific to Al-Muttaqeen, the God-fearing (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 2); and (2) Generally for An-Naas, the whole of humanity (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 185), he added. As to the second objective, he mentioned that in the Arabic language, the term "darkness" in the Qur'an is in plural form while "light" is in singular form. Citing Surah Ibrahim, verse 1 as its basis, he further explained that

the second objective is directed to all people from different walks of life and with all sorts of problems. Lastly, as to the third objective, Ustadh Eissa cited Surah Az-Zumar, verse 2 as his basis. According to him, the Qur'an here is described as the only source that makes one's worship of God, pure.

He also shared the effects of approaching the Qur'an with contemplation or deep thinking and understanding—(1) It makes us Rabbaniyyin, "he who is closer to Allah, knowledgeable of His religion, and teaches it" (Surah 'Ali 'Imran, verse 79); (2) It makes us Muslih, a reformer who aspires to bring about righteousness in others (Surah Al-A'raf, verse 170); (3) It makes us A'imma, leaders (Surah Anbiyah, verse 73), or it creates from us A'imma, leaders or guides (Surah As-Sajdah, verse 24) for our society; (4) We will never be misguided and unhappy in life (Surah Taha, verse 123); and (5) We will never feel afraid of the future nor grieve about the past (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 38).

Citing Surah Al-Jumu'ah, verse 5, Ustadh Eissa likened a Muslim who does not read and follow the Qur'an to a "book-carrying donkey." He then explains Surah Al-Fatihah, verses 6 and 7 that speak about the "straight path" and "those who are blessed to have been traversing it." Describing them further as "People of Paradise," he enumerated the latter into the following: (1) Al-Muttaqeen, the God-fearing ones; (2) Al-Muhsineen, those who seek excellence in worship; (3) Al-Muhmineen, the believers; (4) As-Saaliheen, the righteous ones; (5) Alladheena amaanu wa 'amilus saalihat, those who believe and do good deeds; (6) 'Ababul Rahmaan, servants of the Merciful Allah; (7) 'Ababullahi mukhliseen, the loyal and honest servants of Allah; (8) 'Ulil al-Bab, those who contemplate and possess wisdom; (9) Al-Abraar, those who are good to others; (10) Al-Musalli, the praying ones; (11) Alladheena qaalu rabbunallahu summas taqamu, those who say Allah is our Lord and then remained on the straight path; (12) Man khaafa maqaama Rabbihee, he who feared to stand before his Lord; (13) Al-'Abideen, the worshipers; and (14) As-Saabiquun al-Awwalun, the Pioneers [of Islam].

Being the most used "name" in the Qur'an to describe people of Paradise, Ustadh Eissa suggested the name Al-Muttaqeen for further research. According to him, the root word of the name Al-Muttaqeen is Taqwa and it is the primary teaching of all the prophets. Adding context to Ustadh Eissa's explanation, Engr. Al-Azzouni said that Taqwa is more than just "fear" as it is to "avoid anything that leads to Allah's anger" out of one's love for Him. Citing part of Khutabul Wada, the Last Sermon of Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh), Engr. Al-Azzouni underlined Taqwa as the "basis of man's superiority before Allah."



Stressing the importance of the Qur'an, Ustadh Eissa encouraged everyone, especially the Muslim students, to do further research on it. He suggested the term Iman as another topic of interest as it is mentioned in the Qur'an in many ways. Connecting his topic to the recent issue in the Muslim Filipino communities, Ustadh Eissa shared that instead of the word Aqeedah—not found in the Qur'an, the latter uses the word Iman.

Towards the end of his talk, Ustadh Eissa shows the following details: (1) The concept of Iman is generating huge information about Islamic teaching; (2) There are 140 Names of Allah in the Qur'an instead of 99; and (3) In Surah Al-Fatihah, its reader is "asking to be guided into the straight path" and the answer is in the next chapter—the second verse of Surah Al-Baqarah that says "This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah." Finally, he ended his talk with a reminder of "going back to the Qur'an."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWER FORUM

(1) What specific steps should Muslims follow to become valuable in the reformation?

Response: Ustadh Eissa answered that Muslims must be role model or good examples to others—they should be "walking their talk." He shared that when Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) was asked about the manner of Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh), the former responded that the latter's manner was the Qur'an. In this regard, to become a good example to others, a Muslim must have sufficient knowledge of the Qur'an first, he added. He ended his answer by saying that the Qur'an was revealed for all humanity and that Allah is a God for all humankind.

Response: Engr. Al-Azzouni responded that in their presentation, the word "reform" is used to mean "fixing things" not to "deform it into another form" as in "reform a circle into a square." Thus, when it is applied to a person, that person is fixing himself to do good, he continued. He further said that a reformer must have proven himself of value to others. When a bad person changes for the better upon becoming a Muslim, he or she will be valued by the people around him, which may later be affected by the change, he continued. In the process of reforming, one must go down to the person's level of understanding when giving advice, he added.

(2) How can the Qur'an reshape our thoughts and thinking framework to see the world as Allah wants us to? What are some simple and practical steps to begin with?

Response: Ustadh Eissa responded that in the reformation, a teacher-student relationship must exist. The teacher must lead the students to be a teacher themselves, he continued. According to him, as a starting point, students must be taught to read the Qur'an with the presence of mind—understanding each word and reflecting upon its meaning. One must approach the Qur'an in its entirety and never by parts, he added. Like describing an elephant in a dark room using one's hand and therefore touching its parts only, instead of lighting a candle and seeing its whole existence, he added. Accordingly to him, one could relate it to the names of the "People of Paradise" mentioned in the Qur'an. For instance, Al-Muttaqeen alone generates a web of information or a mind map that makes one feel like the Qur'an is just one verse, he continued.

(3) "We have certainly created man into hardship (Kabad)" (Surah Al-Balad, verse 4). Why do men have to suffer in life as mentioned earlier in one of the verses in the Qur'an?

Response: Ustadh Eissa responded that Kabad does not necessarily mean hardship or suffering, it may mean difficulties or challenges in life. Giving context to the word "Kabad," he used the case of man, Al-Insan, as mentioned in the Qur'an. It is said that Allah created man in its original morality (Akhlak Asliyyah) and the challenge (Kabad) is how to maintain it, he added.



(4) Why do we mention in our prayer the verse Ihdinas Siraatal Mustaqeem (Guide us to the Straight Path)? Does it mean to say we human beings cannot achieve it?

Response: Ustadh Eissa responded that though we, Muslims, are obliged to seek knowledge to be guided, especially by understanding and following the Qur'an, the manifestation of Allah's Mercy and Guidance are all-encompassing. Thus, this particular verse of "seeking guidance to the Straight Path" in Surah Al-Fatihah is part of it, he continued. In that sense, Muslims must keep mentioning it in their prayer while making efforts to do good with utmost reverence towards Allah.

(5) What is Aqeedah? How can we create a structured spiritual formation program that guides Muslims? How do we translate this seminar into a formation program, especially for those reverts or new Muslims?

Response: Engr. Al-Azzouni responded that his organization, the ICSR, has established a special curriculum for the new Muslims—with six levels; every level has nine subjects; with books for students and a teaching manual for teachers; the materials will be ready in English by August 2024. As to the question on Aqeedah, Engr. Al-Azzouni answered that any Muslim who claims to be knowledgeable and then defines other Muslims based on correct or wrong Aqeedah is someone who should never be sought. Engr. Al-Azzouni shared that in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) there are "Schools of Thought" that provide details on the teaching of Islam. For instance, when discussing the "place of Allah," there are two popular opposing ideas that come into play—(1) Allah is sitting on the throne, and (2) Allah is everywhere, he continued. According to him, the discussion on the previously mentioned subject matter is not found in the Qur'an and the Hadith, it is coming from the collective evil of the Schools of Thought. Another issue, according to him, is 'Ibn Taymiyyah's classification of Tawhid, Oneness of Allah, into three—(1) Tawhid Al-Rububiyah (Oneness of Divine Lordship); (2) Tawhid Al-Uluhiyyah (Oneness of Worship); and (3) Tawhid Al-Asma' was-Sifat (Oneness of Allah's Names and Attributes). Since it is permissible in Islam to have different approaches to Islamic teaching, he is not against the three classifications of Tawhid. However, he is against the way people use it—justifying the killing of Muslims by ISIS, promoting political agenda, and among others. He then shared his experience in a Zamboanga City workshop where a participant asked what to do with Muslims who have wrong Aqeedah. According to him, he responded in three ways—(1) He told the man that he was the one who said it and not Islam; (2) That the Qur'an must settle any dispute between Muslims and if the issue falls under the "permissible" then the argument must be stopped; and (3) If a Muslim brother is diverted away then be good and help him "for what are you going to do when you see him fell into a deep well if not to help him out."

Response: Ustadh Eissa responded that Allah commanded the Muslims in the Qur'an to hold onto His "rope" and Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh) in one of his Hadith interpreted the "rope" as the Qur'an itself. He said that if only Muslims hold on to the Qur'an, all their disputes will be resolved. According to him, only around 10 verses of the Qur'an reflect the recent dispute in the Muslim community. He added that the Qur'an is open to interpretation, thus making it applicable anytime, anywhere, and under certain conditions.



For instance, drinking wine while in the middle of the desert is allowed since life is more valuable than the prohibition itself.

(6) What is the Qur’anic paradigm as compared to the Western paradigm? What is the true meaning of jihad? What is the source of inspiration in Islam in terms of religious teaching?

Response: Engr. Al-Azzouni responded first by highlighting the beautiful culture of the "colonized" as compared to the "Western colonizers." He also said that the West called other people "backward" as they imposed their standards reflected in their paradigm—(1) They say people are civilized when they remove their dresses and start wearing bikinis; (2) They say Muslims are uncivilized because they practice polygamy while they are enjoying multiple promiscuous relationships and ignoring the rise of single mothers; (3) They say premarital sex is "cool" and the lack of it is being "psycho"; (4) They say "development" but they only care about the economy, not the "spirit"; (5) They bring in infrastructure development while siphoning your natural resources; and (6) They talk about democracy and liberty while enslaving millions of people. On the contrary, the Qur’anic paradigm offers happiness, goodwill, justice, wisdom, mercy, and public good, he added. As to the question on Jihad, Engr. Al-Azzouni said that "holy war" is a wrong translation. He said Jihad in the Arabic language would mean to do one's best or to "struggle" on something. Referencing the Hadith of Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh), as opposite to "Small Jihad," defensive war, he shared that "Big Jihad" is a struggle in life to be good; to defend one's life, loved ones, and properties; and to endure in times of adversity. As to the question on the "source of inspiration," Engr. Al-Azzouni explained that in Islam, the primary sources of inspiration are the Qur’an and the Sunnah (Traditions and Practices of Prophet Mohammad). He added that like Christianity, Islam also allowed the Tradition (Urf) of every Muslim group to be a source of inspiration as long as it does not go against the fundamental teachings of Islam. He also said that, unlike Christianity, Islam does not have "Fathers of the Church" and while the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh) is considered the source, it is subjected to quality control. He added that Islam does not have an institutional hierarchy in which there is a central authoritative figure like the Pope.

Response: Ustadh Eissa responded that the "Big Jihad" (Jihad Kabir) mentioned in the Qur’an is making an effort to teach the people about the Qur’an.

(7) On the hegemony of knowledge. Are we imposing the values that we uphold and consider them far better than others? What can you say about social media as a platform of neo-colonization?

Response: Engr. Al-Azzouni started his response by citing Sura Ash-Shams, verses 7 and 8 which says “By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right...” Explaining the Surah, he said that Allah created man with the knowledge of good and bad built into him. Here we find that even an innocent baby would have a conscience and be attracted to what is good, he continued. In this sense, Engr. Al-Azzouni is saying that above anything else, let us hold on to “human values” that are geared toward the “good nature” of humanity. As to the question of social media as a platform of neo-colonization, Engr. Al-Azzouni shared his encounter with students in Valencia, Spain wherein despite having good Muslim friends, they still attach the word Islam to terrorism—all because of the controlling effect of the media. Another case is that of an American protester who said “I believe that Gaza people will free Palestine. My big question is who will free us?” According to Engr. Al-Azzouni, the guy was referring to Americans being enslaved by the media, by the system, and by the Western paradigm. He added the case of a Norwegian lady who published the book entitled “Am I Free.” According to him, the author explained in her book how the women in the West are being deceived by the word “equality” where they have to give up their feminine value in favor of masculine value. When he was asked about the case of Islam, he said it is not about “equality,” it is about “equity” and being partners.



Closing Remarks

Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi

In his closing remarks, Prof. Wadi mentioned that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had been signed between the UP Institute of Islamic Studies (UP IIS) and American Open University (AOU) before the Seminar on Humanity and the Holy Qur'an. This was for the awareness of attendees who had not witnessed the first part of the program. Prof. Wadi shared that the American Open University (AOU) was established in 1995 in Washington, DC, and also has a campus in Cairo, Egypt. Prof. Wadi went on to explain that through the MOU, UP IIS and AOU, agreed to develop various activities in academic areas of mutual interest based on equality and reciprocity. These activities include the exchange of faculty, researchers, and administrative staff; exchange of students; collaborative research projects; lectures and symposia; exchange of academic information and materials; and other forms of academic cooperation.

From his observation during the seminar, the brilliant questions raised, and the enlightening lectures of Engr. Ossama and Ustadh Eissa highlighted the need for more engagements. Prof. Wadi proposed that a half-day seminar was insufficient and suggested developing and implementing a series of programs or courses on humanity and the Qur'an, with Ustadh Ahmed Eissa as the faculty. Another proposal was to strengthen the Arabic language course at UP IIS by either sending Arabic teachers from Egypt to UP Diliman or sending faculty and students to Egypt for immersion. This way, both universities would benefit from these activities.

Prof. Wadi also took the opportunity to raise questions addressed to Ustadh Eissa in Arabic. The gist of his question focused on the difference between Ta'wil and Tafsir. Ustadh Eissa responded in Arabic, with Engr. Ossama translating. Based on the definitions and explanations from the Qur'an, Ustadh Eissa clarified that some scholars have varied definitions, but he answered directly from the Qur'an. The word Tafsir is mentioned once in the Qur'an, with Allah (SWT) giving the Prophet the best Tafsir. Tafsir, based on the Qur'anic concept, is the explanation of the Qur'an itself. Ta'wil, on the other hand, is the application of the Qur'an to life and its manifestation in realities.



For instance, when Allah (SWT) mentions His people facing Judgment Day in the Qur'an, they experience it in reality. Ta'wil means seeing what the Qur'an states in real life. Prophet Joseph's dream becoming real was referred to as Ta'wil.

After listening to the response, Prof. Wadi highlighted the relevance of translation projects, such as translating materials from Arabic to English, so participants can easily understand valuable content. He suggested commencing this by translating Ustadh Eissa's presentation, with the English version to be used for future lectures at UP IIS, allowing students to comprehensively understand his teachings.

Prof. Wadi concluded by mentioning that UP IIS will be producing the proceedings of the seminar. He thanked all attendees for their participation and expressed hope for the same active involvement in future courses or programs of the Institute. He also asked for prayers for the Institute's successful transfer to its new home, with many programs and activities, including its renaming as the National Institute of Islamic Studies.

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION



From L-R: Group photo of Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa, Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni, Atty. Edgardo Carlo L. Vistan II and Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi.



From L-R: Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa, Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni, Atty. Edgardo Carlo L. Vistan II and Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi signs the MOU between the University of the Philippines Diliman and American Open University.



Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni introduces Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa to Atty. Edgardo Carlo L. Vistan II and Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi.



Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni lectures on the Paradigm of Reforming during the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni lectures on the Paradigm of Reforming during the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa lectures on the Humanity and the Qur'an with Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni as translator during the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa and Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni listens to a question raised during the Q&A forum of the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



A student from the UP MSA raises his question during the Q&A forum of the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



A student from the UP IIS raises his question during the Q&A forum of the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



A student from the Xavierian Missionaries raises his question during the Q&A forum of the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



Attendees of the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



A student from the UP IIS his question during the Q&A forum of the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi awards a certificate of appreciation to Engr. Ossama Al-Azzouni during the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.




Prof. Julkipli M. Wadi and Asst. Prof. Darwin J. Absari award a certificate of appreciation to Ustadh Ahmed Hamdeen Eissa during the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



A group photo of the organizers, partners, and attendees of the Seminar on Humanity and the Qur'an held May 23, 2024 at Room 300, Virata Hall, UP Diliman campus.



University of the Philippines-Diliman
Institute of Islamic Studies

 +63.2.8929.8286 or +63.2.8981.8500 local 3583

 2nd Flr. Virata Hall, ISSI Bldg, UP Diliman, Quezon City

 www.iis.upd.edu.ph