

## Knowledge and Science in Islam (or The Lost Sciences)

**Instructor:** Shuja Ali Mirza

**Duration:** 2 Sessions

**Introduction:** Islam is the religion of knowledge and certainty. The words ‘knowledge’ and ‘intellect’ are prominent and preeminent in all Islamic texts. A deep perusal of these texts reveals that ‘knowledge’ is not something simplistic—it is not just a collection of unrelated facts and figures about various visible things. In the Islamic view, knowledge is a single whole and it is layered. It starts from the immaterial and extends to the material realm, all parts and levels being connected in one holistic order. As its ultimate goal is the One, its source and methodology are also inspired and informed by the One and Only, *al-‘Alīm al-Ḥakīm*. After shedding light on the above, the course will turn to how this traditional understanding of knowledge has been reduced to a mere shadow of what it used to be. The lost sciences of the traditional world will be enumerated and outlined. The course will go on to address the issue of modern science and “knowledge” in modern academia. It will conclude by discussing the traditional channels of Islamic knowledge in our day and their important role in reversing the trend of reducing knowledge and also in inspiring the profane sciences so that they can come to be seen as a part of knowledge in Islam.

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## United Ummah and Muslim Unity

**Instructor:** Shuja Ali Mirza

**Duration:** 2 Sessions

**Introduction:** It does not take much to convince Muslims that the Ummah is one, ideally and in principle. It is also easy to elicit from them admissions and even lamentations of the current state of affairs—of an Ummah that is plagued with disunity and discord. The causes of divisiveness that have left the Ummah in such a torn and tattered state are, no doubt, various and manifold. The course will try to understand some of these causes and will look for a “solution”. Realizing that unity will not be achieved just by being aware of the need, nor by harbouring a thousand good intentions, the study will turn to both the intellect and traditional authority for guidance.

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## Idols of the Modern World

**Instructor:** Salim Yusufali

**Duration:** 8 Sessions

*Among the people are those who set up compeers besides Allah, loving them as if loving Allah but the faithful have a more ardent love for Allah - though the wrongdoers will see, when they sight the punishment, that power, altogether, belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment. (2:165)*

**Introduction:** Throughout history, one of the ugliest manifestations of the human being turning away from Allah has been the idol. Initially a rudimentary object fashioned of base material, the modern idol is subject to even a greater degree of worship, yet due to its sophisticated nature is able to penetrate into our hearts without our even being aware of its influence upon us. In this course we aim firstly to examine the definition and role of idols, the history of idol worship, and reasons behind idol worship from the Qur'an and *hadith*. We will then continue to study some of the idols of the modern era such as individualism, feminism, pluralism, democracy, modern forms of entertainment, and capitalism by reviewing scholarly critiques of these ideologies.

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## Spiritual Guidance of the Ma'sumin

**Instructor:** Salim Yusufali

**Duration:** 8 Sessions

Narrated from Imam al-Baqir ('a): *Seek in the east, seek in the west; you shall not find any knowledge which is valid except that which emanates from us, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).* (al-Kafi v. 1 p. 399)

**Introduction:** Within the rich traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) lie many jewels of spiritual teachings that need to be studied and pondered upon. In this course, we aim to study one such tradition regarding the spiritual *jihad* in detail, along with the commentary of Imam Khumayni (may Allah sanctify his soul) on this tradition from chapter 1 of Imam Khumayni's commentary on 40 *ahadith*.

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## The Unfolding Sharī'ah

**Instructor:** Amin Rastani

**Duration:** 6 Sessions

**Introduction:** What is *fiqh*? Who is a *faqīh*? How does one become a *faqih*? What is the importance of *fiqh* in Islam? What developments has Shī'ah *fiqh* put behind and how has it grown over the decades after the major occultation of the twelfth imam ('a)? What are some of the arguments presented against taqlid and the *fiqh* of the jurists and what does the Howzah have to say in refutation of such arguments? This course explores the answers to these and other questions surrounding one of the most downplayed fields of Islamic thought that is sometimes taken for granted in the contemporary Islamic world.

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## Approaching the Quran

**Instructor:** Amin Rastani

**Duration:** 6 Sessions

**Introduction:** The Quran introduces itself as a book of guidance to all of mankind; this implies that it is a book understandable and approachable for all. But just like any other book, there are certain concepts and principles to keep in mind before approaching it, to guarantee an accurate understanding of what it intends to convey to the people. Neglect of such may lead to erroneous conclusions that can sometimes be detrimental to the faith or Islamic worldview and understanding of the believing individual. This course seeks to shed light on some of these concepts in a very general sense, while at the same time providing practical examples to better understand the importance of having the right approach to the Quran and give an idea of what happens when this isn't observed.

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## Qur'ānic Eschatology

**Instructor:** Jaffer Jaffer

**Duration:** 3 Sessions

**Introduction:** The Qur'anic study of Death and Life after Death. We find that nearly One-Fourth of the Holy Qur'an discusses the subject of Death and Life after Death, showing us the importance of believing and being certain about these events. In this class we will examine Qur'anic verses which discuss a range of subjects such as: Death, Barzakh, Resurrection, Hisab, Sirat...etc. which will allow us to strengthen our core theological beliefs.

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## Qur'ānic Sciences

**Instructor:** Sayyid Asad Jafri

**Duration:** 3 Sessions

**Introduction:** This course will mainly focus on the historical context of the Holy Quran. Topics such as: Descent, Revelation and the Miracle nature of the Quran will be discussed. The purpose of such a course is to gain a better understanding of the Quran outside of the world of Tafseer. Its primary objective is to instigate and nurture a closeness with this Glorious Book that will lead us to want to delve deeper into its meaning.

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## Perfection illuminated

**Instructor:** Ali Karmali

**Duration:** 2 Sessions

**Introduction:** What is the perfect human being? What is the perfect Muslim? How can we strive to reach perfection? This session will be a comparative analysis of various ideologies viz-a-vis their understanding of perfection. In doing so, we will learn more about the nature of human beings, their potential of achieving perfection and closeness to the Almighty, InshaAllah.

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## Doctrines for Living Islam

**Instructor:** Zainab Mirza

**Duration:** 11 Sessions

**Introduction:** Doctrines are truths taught on the basis of religious authority that help human beings understand reality and the Real, God the most high. It is only when we understand, to some degree and in some sense, the ultimate Truth that we can will according to the supreme Good. The course will begin by explaining the different modes of human understanding, or epistemology. It will then turn to the realm of objective reality and discuss ontology. It will continue by showing how these two are intimately related to the knowledge of the human state and humanity, anthropology. Thereafter, the study will cover the traditional topics of Tawhid, 'adl, nubuwwah, imamah, and ma'ad. Each topic will conclude by showing how its associated true ideas are not just mental concepts unrelated to the practical level but rather, the basis of living life in the most fulfilling sense.

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## Hijab and Meaning

**Instructor:** Zainab Mirza

**Duration:** 5 Sessions

**Introduction:** Hijab is a reality that has been present in all times and in all civilizations in some form or another. What could be the reasons for this? Why is it that all religions, especially the Abrahamic ones, have mandated special codes of modesty for women? What is peculiar about Islam that has resulted in its emphasis upon Hijab? What is the meaning of Hijab? How does it relate to the innate reality of human souls and their *fitrah*? The course will address the above questions and other intellectual inquiries relating to Hijab. It will then turn to the saintly paragons of intellectuality and divine sources of authority—the Ma'sumin ('a)—to seek practical guidance from them on the issue of Hijab. It will conclude with a structured explanation of the laws of the Shariah regarding Hijab.

**Outline:**

Lesson One: Introduction to Hijab—Its Historical Manifestations, Reasons, and Forms?

Lesson Two: Fitrah (Divine originality/centeredness) vs. Nature (Carnal dissipation/distraction)  
Lesson Three: Hijab in the Qur'an and the Spirit of Hijab  
Lesson Four: Practical Laws of Hijab  
Lesson Five: Ideals and Nuances of Hijab

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## Islamic Rulings Pertaining to Women's Issues

**Instructor:** Shaista Yusufali

**Duration:** 3 - 4 Sessions

**Introduction:** A thorough and straight-forward review of legal rulings particular to Muslim women. Using clear principles and examples, these sessions will help to clarify and simplify rules that are often seen as scary or complicated, allowing Muslim women to abide by the dictates of servitude (*ubudiyyah*). Topics include *haydh*, *istihadha*, hijab, adornment, and gender interaction.