

background - and also of increasing relevance in the modern world: Islamic business ethics, the basis of a debt- and interest-free Islamic economic system, Islamic banking.

Department of Traditional Herbal Medicine (Unani Tibbiya College): It is one of the paradoxes of Afghan society that while the population has great belief in traditional herbal medicine, and the hills of the border regions abound in medicinal herbs, there are no medical colleges which specialize in herbal medicine. This lack of symmetry between supply and demand has led to preponderance of unqualified physicians, something that the Unani Tibbiya College, or the Traditional Herbal Medicine department of the Islamic Vocational Academy seeks to address by producing fully-qualified hakims - herbal medicine physicians. Traditional herbal medicine - popularly known as “tibb-e-nabavi” (Medicine of the Prophet) has historically been a favoured profession of Islamic scholars - a tradition that the Islamic Vocational Academy is seeking to revive in Afghanistan.

Centre for Peace Studies: Nothing is more fundamental to the Islamic way of life than peace - the very words Islam and peace are derived from the same Arabic root. Furthermore, peace with honour is the greatest need of the people of Afghanistan and particularly of the border areas. The Islamic Vocational Academy has a specialized Peace Studies module, entitled Pax Islamica and taught by the head and founder of the Islamic Vocational Academy. How can peace in modern times become a “great victory” (Al-Quran, 48:1) for the Muslims, as it was in the time of the Holy Prophet? This is the fundamental question that the Islamic Academy Peace Studies module seeks to address. At present, the Peace Studies module is taught as part of the Islamic Outreach Department of the Islamic Vocational Academy, which looks forward to establishing a dedicated Peace Studies centre, developing a philosophy of Islamic pacifism for the modern age.

Partner radio station: With the first students of the Islamic Vocational Academy due to graduate in the spring of 2012, employment for these graduates is a major priority. The launching of a partner radio station to the Islamic Vocational Academy - Da Saba Storay (Morning Star) Radio in Jalalabad - has meant that graduates are able to receive immediate job experience - from the Business Studies Department in the marketing field and from the Journalism and Mass Communication Department on the broadcasting side. Da Saba Storay Radio station also plays



The launch of the Islamic Vocational Academy's partner radio station - Da Saba Storay Radio - was held in the grounds of the Islamic Vocational Academy

in key role in raising awareness in the local community about activities of the Islamic Academy.

Founder of the Academy: The Islamic Vocational Academy has been founded by the head of PACT Radio - the former BBC journalist and broadcaster John Butt. He explains his motivation for establishing the Islamic Vocational Academy in the following words:

“I am trying to give back to Pashtoons what they gave to me. They gave me Islam over 40 years ago, a grounding in traditional Islam, a good Islamic education - in 1983 I became the only European ever to graduate from Darul Uloom Deoband - and then a successful career in the media - I rose to senior management with the BBC in Afghanistan before branching out on a career in traditional media. I would like other Pashtoon religious scholars to have similar opportunities, and also to be a more effective force for peace and well-being in their own community.”

Since 1999, John Butt has been Muslim chaplain (Imam) in Cambridge University in England. He continues to occasionally visit Cambridge, to perform his chaplaincy duties.

Supporting the Islamic Vocational Academy: The Islamic Vocational Academy depends on the support of the local community, both inside Afghanistan and among the Pashtoon and Afghan community abroad. The Islamic Vocational Academy seeks to set an example of transparency for other Islamic educational establishments and is committed to providing a clear budget of expenditure, a record of all income received and annual accounts. Details of how you can contribute financially to the work of the Islamic Vocational Academy are available on the donations page of the Islamic Academy website: www.afghanjamiya.org



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Islamic Vocational Academy

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قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم:

ما أكل أحد طعاما قط خيرا من أن يأكل من عمل يده.

رواه البخارى

No provision is better than that which one earns from the labour of one's own hand. (Hadith)



A brief introduction

How the idea came about:

In March 2009, a meeting of Islamic scholars of Afghanistan - organized by PACT Radio in collaboration with the Afghan Ministry of Education - took place in Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan. The theme of the meeting was “Religious madrassahs in the modern age”. In this three-day meeting, the assembled scholars arrived at certain conclusions. For example:





A meeting of Islamic scholars, held in Jalalabad in the spring of 2009, led to the establishment of the Islamic Vocational Academy

- There is a need for contemporary subjects,.....to be introduced into the curriculum of madrassahs. In particular, those subjects should be introduced which make religious subjects more clear.
- Various differences between school and madrassah systems have created divisions in Afghan society.
- An increase of religious studies in schools, and an increase of contemporary subjects in madrassahs, can help heal these divisions.
- The conference supports PACT Radio in the establishment of media centres, and an Islamic radio station in madrassahs, so long as the programmes of PACT Radio conform to Afghan and Islamic traditions.
- Besides leading prayers, and teaching in Islamic madrassahs, mullas should also adopt other legitimate professions, such as practice of medicine, trade and journalism.
- Along with media centres, other vocational centres should also be established in madrassahs, in order to acquaint students with suitable professions.

Soon after the conference, the Islamic Vocational Academy was established for the implementation of these resolutions.

Main aims of the Academy:

The Islamic Vocational Academy imparts higher, career-oriented education to graduates of religious madrassahs in the mainly Pashto-speaking Pak-Afghan border regions of Afghanistan. The Academy takes on madrassah graduates and gives them a grounding in media, business studies and traditional Unani medicine. The aim is to increase career options for Islamic scholars - in line with their own academic background - broaden their horizons, make their outlook more contemporary, improve their economic well-being and enable them to serve their community in

a wide range of fields, in the process making them more effective as a force for peace, progress, prosperity and piety in the modern world.

Departments of the Islamic Vocational Academy:

The Islamic Vocational Academy has four departments:
1. Islamic Outreach Department: compulsory for all students at the Islamic Vocational Academy.
In addition to Islamic Outreach, students study in one of the following vocational departments:

- Journalism and Mass Communication
- Business Studies
- Traditional Unani Medicine

Islamic Outreach Department:

Studies in Islamic Outreach take up half the teaching time in the Islamic Academy. This, and the fact that study in this department is compulsory for all students, indicates the importance which the Islamic Academy attaches to Islamic outreach - commonly known as Islamic dawa. The aim of this department is to inculcate in Islamic scholars a dawa-oriented mentality - in other words a desire and know-how that will enable them to positively contribute to the strengthening of their community and humanity in the modern age. In particular, the Islamic Vocational Academy has identified five main areas in which Islamic scholars can make a particular contribution:

- in the spiritual sphere, by making modern man more aware of the appeal of Islam as a religion preserved in its original state (Al-Quran, 15:9) and thus able to give true spiritual fulfillment to humankind (Al-Quran, 13:28).
- in the environmental sphere, by making modern man aware of Islam as a religion which impresses on human beings the need to live in harmony with nature (Al-Quran, 3:83).
- in the economic sphere, by showing modern man that there is an Islamic alternative to the debt- and interest-based capitalist economy and that this alternative is the interest- and debt-free system of Islam, based on charity (Al-Quran, 2:276), trade (Al-Quran, 2:275), honesty and integrity.
- in the media sphere, by showing the world a media based not only on freedom, but also on taking responsibility for the consequences of what one writes.
- in the family sphere, by reviving the strong family values that Islam espouses.

Many of these points are reinforced in the vocational departments of the Islamic Academy:

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication:

In accordance with the academic background of madrassah students, the Islamic Vocational Academy specializes in "traditional" as opposed to "conventional" media. Like its parent organization PACT Radio, the Islamic Vocational Academy seeks to develop a needs-based media culture around traditional values. This contrasts strongly with the approach of the conventional, news-based media. This alternative, needs-based media is based on values such as building a popular consensus for solution of problems, in particular conflict (Al-Quran, 49:9); concentrating on the moral of the story (Al-Quran, 12:111); careful checking of the reliability and veracity of sources (Al-Quran, 49:6); feeling a sense of responsibility for the consequences of what one reports. Courses such as Modern Journalism Based on Traditions of Classical Islamic Scholarship - looking at the model of those who compiled and collated the Ahadith (news) and Akhbar (stories) from the Holy Prophet's life as the best model for good journalism - and Storytelling in a Contemporary Context - looking at modern formats of traditional storytelling as a source of both entertainment and education - make the courses of the JMC Department among the most innovative of any institution of its kind.



Even before the establishment of the Islamic Vocational Academy, the head of PACT Radio - and founder of the Islamic Vocational Academy - used to teach traditional media modules in madrassah media centres, established in the border areas by PACT Radio

Department of Business Studies: Besides concentrating on conventional aspects of business management and administration, the two-year Business Studies course in the Islamic Vocational Academy looks at topics which are of particular interest to students from a madrassah