

Stop Wasting Time, Start Living Your Faith

Diploma Course Prospectus 2026-27

iSyllabus
islam · iman · ihsan

Relevance of Content & Context



SHAYKH AMER JAMIL
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When I think about the iSyllabus One-Year Diploma, one of the things that stands out most strongly after years of teaching is the relationship between content and context. What we teach matters enormously, but so does the world into which that knowledge is being received.

The Muslim living in Britain today encounters Islam in a very different setting from the student studying in Damascus, Cairo or Madinah a century ago. The questions are different, the pressures are different, and often the assumptions through which people understand religion are different. A curriculum designed for Muslims in the West therefore has to take those realities seriously. It must remain rooted in the Islamic scholarly tradition, while helping students understand how that tradition speaks to the circumstances in which they actually live.

That has always been one of the strengths of the iSyllabus One-Year Diploma, and seeing thousands of students go on and thrive in their lives underlines this.

The course does not simply take a number of traditional Islamic subjects and place them beside one another. The content has been selected, sequenced and connected with a particular student in mind. Someone with work commitments, family responsibilities and limited study time. Someone living within a culture where religion is regularly questioned. Someone who may have accumulated a surprising amount of Islamic information, but has never had the opportunity to organise it into a coherent understanding.
Over the years, I have seen how important that difference can be.

Students often arrive knowing individual rulings, quotations or opinions. They may have listened to hundreds of lectures. Yet when confronted with a difficult question, they are unsure how the pieces relate to one another. One of the changes that takes place during the Diploma is that students gradually begin to see Islam as an integrated tradition. Fiqh starts to connect with legal principles. Worship connects with spirituality. Qurʾān and ḥadīth are understood through the scholarly disciplines that developed around them. Questions of creed begin to make sense within a wider intellectual framework.

The result is greater confidence, but it is a confidence grounded in understanding.

Take Islamic law. It is relatively easy to teach a student that a particular action is permitted or prohibited. It is much more valuable to help them understand something of how scholars reached those conclusions, why legitimate differences exist, and how principles developed centuries ago continue to function when Muslims encounter new circumstances.

This is why the Diploma introduces students to the theory behind Islamic law alongside practical case studies. The purpose is to allow them to see something of the process by which scholars move from revealed sources to legal judgement. Students begin to appreciate that Islamic law has both stability and an ability to address new situations through disciplined reasoning.



Relevance of content & context

I have seen the same effect when teaching ḥadīth. Many Muslims encounter a ḥadīth online and naturally ask, "If the Prophet ﷺ said this, why does everyone not simply follow it?" That is a reasonable question. But answering it properly requires context.

Students need to understand how scholars assess evidence, how texts interact with one another, and why the legal schools sometimes reach different conclusions even when authentic ḥadīths appear to support a particular practice.

Once students begin to understand this, disagreement stops looking like confusion. It becomes something they can analyse with greater maturity.



Spirituality is another area where context matters. Discussions about purification of the heart can easily become abstract. Yet the diseases described by earlier scholars remain present within us, even if the circumstances through which they appear have changed.

The One-Year Diploma therefore examines the qalb, the sources of spiritual illness, shubuhāt and shahawāt, and practical ways of recognising and treating these conditions.

This has always mattered to me as a teacher. Knowledge that leaves the person unchanged is incomplete. Islamic learning should affect how someone worships, speaks, deals with family, responds to disagreement and understands his or her relationship with Allah.

Some of the most rewarding moments in teaching come when a student begins to recognise that connection. Prayer is no longer simply a list of rules. ʿAqīdah is no longer a set of propositions to memorise. Islamic law is no longer a collection of answers. The different sciences begin to shed light on one another.

The same principle shapes the treatment of family life, wealth, zakāt, marriage and divorce. These are areas in which Muslims regularly face real decisions. The Diploma therefore places classical law alongside the circumstances in which students are likely to apply it, allowing them to understand both the rule and the reasoning that gives the rule its proper place.

Perhaps the deepest change I have witnessed is that students become less dependent upon isolated answers. They begin asking better questions. They become more comfortable with complexity. They recognise the difference between genuine scholarship and confident assertion. They also become less troubled by the fact that scholars may disagree.

That, for me, is one of the clearest signs that education is working.

The aim of the iSyllabus One-Year Diploma has never been simply to teach more Islamic information. It is to help Muslims develop a coherent way of understanding their religion, grounded in its scholarly inheritance and conscious of the world in which they have been asked to live.

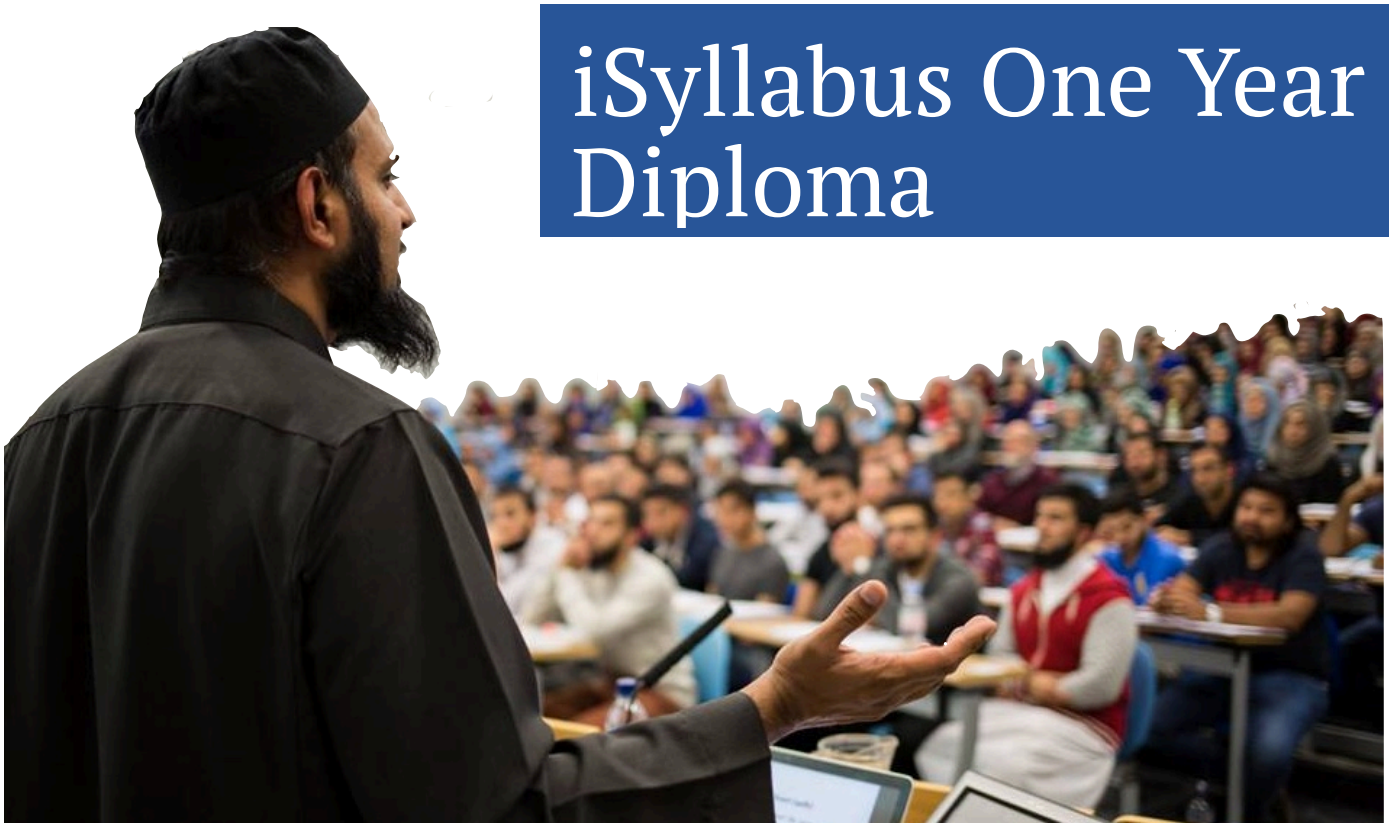
Content gives students knowledge. Context allows them to understand its significance.

When those two are brought together carefully, Islamic learning begins to do what it has always been meant to do. It informs the mind, shapes the character and helps a person live their faith with greater clarity and purpose.

We look forward to welcoming into this year's class!

SHAYKH AMER JAMIL
iSyllabus Project Director

iSyllabus One Year Diploma



The iSyllabus 'Diploma' course provides a comprehensive and detailed introduction to Islamic studies in a graded format, with students being introduced to core ideas which are developed and carefully expanded as the course continues. By integrating and constantly cross referencing the content of all modules and subjects, the studying experience is smooth and seamless.

An informed and coherent representation of the Islamic faith tradition has always been a condition of Islamic renaissance. The iSyllabus Diploma consists of modules that shed much needed light on the timeless principles that protect the Islamic faith from arbitrary and extremist distortions, while concurrently allowing the tradition the capacity of facing up to the demands of modern life.

The Modules

The Laws of Purity and Prayer

Through a set of 4 modules, students will be introduced to the spirituality and practice of Islamic worship. These modules will also be used as a basis to explore the guiding principles of the legal methodology and legal maxims that aid Muslims in navigating the many religious and secular challenges they face.

1. **Seeking Purity**
This module provides students with an introduction to the laws relating to ritual purity in Islamic law. Students are given a detailed insight into the theory and practice of ritual purity and the spiritual aspects of cleanliness, as well as focusing on contemporary issues and case studies related to taharah.

2. **Setting the base for Worship**
The first prayer module provides students with an understanding of the theory and practice of prayer, examining the most important elements that make up daily worship. It covers the preconditions necessary before one prays, as well as the pillars of the prayer, without which there is no prayer. The importance of performing the prayer, as well as the way to rectify mistakes will be addressed in detail, together with the necessary spiritual awareness that is at the core of heartfelt worship.

3. Perfecting the Prayer
The second prayer module sets out the manner in which the prayer is perfected, focusing on the prophetic manner of praying. This includes case studies on method of prayer for women and the significance of number when used in Shariah text, as well as the benefits of sending salutations upon the Prophet and the night prayer vigil (tahajjud).

4. Returning to the Homeland
The third and final prayer module looks at the theory and practice of the jum'ah and travelling prayer, with a case study on the various positions on combining prayers. It will finish with practical considerations of what is done when someone dies, from the throes of death through to sending rewards of good actions to the deceased once they have been buried. This also includes a detailed case study on the concept of Bidah (innovation) in classical Islamic law and Theology.

Towards a Tranquil Soul

The process of perfecting one's character is a necessary precondition to heartfelt devotion. The theory and practice of purifying the heart -spiritual detox- will be investigated through 2 modules, which describe how to free oneself of internal and external blameworthy traits and habits, and acquire those spiritual qualities that are the hallmarks of the Prophets.

5. Towards a Tranquil Soul 1
The first module will allow students to understand the importance of the science of tazkiyyah (spiritual purification) and how it relates to us as humans. It will also allow students to appreciate how the word 'qalb' or 'heart' is used differently in various religious sources, and those factors that affect the spiritual health of the heart and the rest of the bodily limbs.

6. Towards a Tranquil Soul 2
This follow-on to the first module will analyse the two different sources of the ailments of the heart (shubahat and shahawat) and show how knowing this helps to cure spiritual diseases. The various ailments that affect the spiritual heart will be pinpointed, with practical tips and techniques that aid in their cure.

Understanding the Divine Sources

7. Understanding the Quran
Entitled '*Investigating the history, form and importance of the Qur'anic revelation*', this module introduces students to the status, history and nature of the Qur'an, the sacred book of Islam. Students will also be provided with an insight into those elements necessary for a clear contextual reading of the Qur'anic revelation, as well as the scholarly techniques required in the understanding of the Qur'an.

8. Understanding the Sunnah
This module will give students access to in-depth original writing related to the importance, preservation and vocabulary of the hadith sciences, with particular emphasis on the era of the Companions. By examining how mainstream Muslim scholars have interacted with the vast hadith literature, it will provide an insightful and balanced understanding of this important source of Islamic knowledge.

Living the Law

These 2 modules give students a deep appreciation of the underlying principles that have given Islam both its historic stability, as well as the requisite dynamism to face up to the challenges of the age. In the first, the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, together with the higher objectives of the law will be explored, with the aim of laying down the ground rules for ethical and principled thinking in areas of contemporary concern. The second of these modules consits of case studies focusing on pressing legal and ethical questions facing Muslims in the West.

9. Living the Law 1 - The Theory
Entitled 'Understanding the theory behind Islamic law in the modern age', this module aims to give students a greater appreciation of the theoretical and practical dynamics involved in understanding Shari'ah law in the modern world. This will be done by observing the sources used in formulating authentic Islamic responses to contemporary issues.

10. Living the Law 2 - Case studies
Building on what has been learned in previous modules, this module gives students a behind-the- scenes insight into how scholars look at new issues. The case studies on modern issues used in the module explore how timeless principles are appropriated to address the major legal and ethical dilemmas of the day.

By the end of this module, students will:
Engage in discussion and informed debate on the burning moral and ethical issues of the day; Be able to navigate complex issues through the lens of principled thinking; Appreciate the benefit of scholarly differences of opinion; Help others to better understand issues of debate in the community.





Articulating Muslim Creed

Life is full of ideas, events, and people that test our beliefs - sometimes, even shake them. In our culture of scientism and scepticism, religion is seen as foolish, irrational, and outdated. Muslims have a responsibility to know and articulate their beliefs in the light of these prevailing trends.

Based on a core creedal articles of the famous Sunni creed of Imam At-Tahhawi, formatted thematically with relevant historical and cultural notes that aid in the understanding of the topic, these two modules allow students to understand both what Muslims believe and why. The modules will aid students in articulating and presenting Muslim belief in the Divine attributes, the nature and qualities of Messengers, as well as issues relating to the Hereafter and the Unseen. Students will thereby be afforded the capacity to navigate misconceptions and flawed beliefs prevalent in contemporary Muslim discourse.

11. Understanding Muslim Creed 1
The first module provides students with an understanding of the key issues of Islamic creed (al-aqidah) related to the 'testification of faith' (al-Shahadah), as explained by the scholarly tradition of Sunni Islam. The Muslim belief in God will be explored, explaining how scholars have set out to preserve the unique oneness of God in the face of internal and external challenges to this. It also sets out the hermeneutical framework by which issues of creed are classified into what is essential and what is not.

12. Understanding Muslim Creed 2
The second module will continue the trajectory set by the first module, covering the essential beliefs due to the Prophets, as well as Sunni Islam's understanding of issues such as freewill and predestination, belief in the Unseen, 'Faith and the Community', as well as a case study on *Takfir* and 'Who is a Muslim?'.

Family and society

13. Understanding the law and spirituality of income & charity
Having successfully completed the module 'Understanding the law and spirituality of income & charity', students should have an appreciation of the theory and practice of earning a pure and halal livelihood, as well as the sacred laws of zakat and charity. They should also understand the issues related to those that are expressly eligible to receive zakat and those who are not. The module will cover detailed issues of modern Zakat law, balanced with inculcating the importance of understanding what Rizq is and how to acquire it.

14. The Sacred Bond
Described as half of faith, marriage has provided a tried and tested foundation for a balanced and healthy society. Through this module, students will gain an appreciation of the workings of a successful marriage and household.

It will cover the fiqh and etiquette of the marital bond, the detailed laws and outcomes of divorce, as well as the rights and responsibilities that this necessarily entails, clarifying many prevalent misunderstandings in family issues. The module also contains a detailed case-study on prenuptial agreements.

Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy

15. The Tradition of scholars
Consisting of 2 half-modules, these lessons are designed to provide an introduction to the history and practice of Islamic learning. They examine the requisite etiquette and mannerisms (adab al-ta'alum) that have been behind the strength of the student-teacher relationship in Islamic scholarship throughout history. The module then continues to investigate how a stable orthodoxy developed within the Muslim knowledge culture in both fiqh as well as aqidah.

Together, it provides a snapshot into how Islamic knowledge is transmitted and preserved, observing how scholars of the past conserved the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ through Islamic history, sitting at the feet of scholars and taking the prophetic inheritance directly, face to face.

In an age when everyone claims to speak on behalf of Islam, these sessions provide a refreshing roadmap to reviving the study of Islam for the modern individual, looking at what qualifies a person to speak on religious matters.

Welcome to iSyllabus
Recalibrating Islamic education in the West



A word from our Educational Director

What is it that is significantly different about the iSyllabus Islamic studies program compared to other course on offer in the West? Surely most courses are essentially the same?

I am asked this question all the time from prospective students, as well as scholars who have their own educational initiatives running in the West.

When we set-out to write our curriculum, and particularly the One Year Diploma course, there was already a number of innovative initiatives doing excellent work in the field of Islamic education: they covered both essential Islamic knowledge as well as offering ongoing advanced studies in the Islamic sciences. However, when looking to enhance the provision of Islamic education in the West, we focused on five key issues identified as being critical to making Islamic education serve the needs of individuals and communities. These issues revolved around the central question all famous traditional curriculum of the Muslim world would have asked: ***What is the religious and social function for which students are being prepared?***

The subsequent review informed the full program that iSyllabus now offers. We asked why we are educating, how it is done and what we use as a marker of success. We believe this review, as well as the ongoing discussion and dialogue with teachers and scholars, makes the courses we offer unique. So what are these key issues?

1. Relevance. Identifying the most relevant topics of religious discourse in the West. The issues discussed and debated by Muslims and non-Muslims about Islam was central to deciding what content should be at the centre of the full curriculum. In a largely post-religious world as we live in today, such a recalibrating of religious content is particularly important to safeguard religion itself from being seen as irrelevant. After incorporating the essentials that every Muslim should know about their religion, the course develops the capacities within students that will aid them in flourishing into confident members of their societies. What are the core methodological issues that require attention in teaching an Islam that is both true to its intellectual heritage yet responsive to the age we live in? What are the elements that need to be developed in an Islamic studies curriculum to move towards a constructive and balanced Sunni orthodoxy/orthopraxy? What types of polemics are targeted against Islam and how can Muslims develop a framework that adequately defends its core teachings from such challenges?

2. Function. Acknowledging the changing dynamics of religious leadership in the Modern world. One observation made while surveying religious practice in the West is the changing dynamics in the provision of religious advocacy and guidance. Effective religious leadership is no longer centralised with a person like an Imam. Instead new and dynamic structures dictated by social media and community initiatives are developing apace. Religious scholarship has now become democratised and this is a phenomena that should be embraced by our scholarly tradition, being as it is inherently part of the tradition. Any religious training program that is taught in the West has to therefore be aware that students that complete their studies will be required to provide religious guidance and inputs in a wide array of contexts.

3. Synthesis. Incorporating elements from successful Islamic studies syllabi of the Muslim world. A review was done of the most signifiant syllabi used in the Muslim world. These include: The Darsi Nizami of the Subcontinent (which is now albeit only partially taught as compared to the original curriculum) with its focus on the ancillary sciences; The Tahqiq (verification) method of Kurdish scholarship used in Turkey, Iraq and Syria, which focuses on discursive teaching methods; The Syrian model, best exemplified by Mahad al-Fath in Damascus, known for both its rigorous repetition and review of core content coupled with the comprehensive array of sciences covered.



The Syrian model was used to ensure that students adequately complete all core content with the required degree of competency; The relevant elements from all the above were incorporated to inform the content of our program.

4. Language. Nurturing the English language as a Muslim language of instruction. Throughout its history, Islam has naturally integrated itself into native cultures and made use of indigenous languages to spread its teaching. In doing so it elevated them, as with Persian, Malay, Hausa, Turkish, Urdu and others, to being civilisational languages of the Ummah. As a result, Muslim scholarship was able to develop and be internalised by the cultures of the lands where these languages were spoken.

This was a statement of intent by Muslims scholars of a long term commitment to these lands. English is now the common language of communication for the majority of the world's Muslims and so iSyllabus is committed to creating a complete and holistic Islamic studies curriculum that is fully teachable via the English language. It also works to develop a students appreciation of the Arabic language by focusing on core technical Arabic vocabulary used in the Islamic sciences. By giving students the context and significant variations in vocabulary usage, the course is able to create leverage to enhance a students understanding of the subjects studied.

This is also a logical step to take, since studies in educational pedagogy continually show that the internalisation and understanding of fine and nuanced points, such as those discussed in Islamic law and theology, is either missed or misconstrued if the language of instruction is one that the learner does not have complete mastery of.

5. Competency. Developing religious literacy and competency in the Islamic sciences. While rote-learning has always had a role in Islamic pedagogy, the insistence to overly rely on this element of religious training has had a detrimental result on the educational development. The program developed by iSyllabus plots a student's progression not simply through how much they have memorised. Rather it measures the development of critical religious literacy as well as competency over the contents of the subjects studied. Identifying the logical fallacies inherent in so much discourse on Islam - both from Muslims and non-Muslims - is one of the critical challenges facing students of the Islamic sciences today. The ability of students to navigate real-life as well as academic scenarios using their learning is key to measuring successful Islamic syllabi today.



The Result: Our DIPLOMA Course

The resultant iSyllabus course is therefore bespoke and has been authored from the ground up - from the opening modules to the final lessons, incorporating the action points identified in the review above. We Start with the essentials every Muslim needs, then build gradually towards a wider understanding of revelation, belief, law, spirituality and Muslim life. And the key is sequence.

Islamic subjects should not be studied as disconnected topics. Ideas introduced in one area should support and deepen what is learned in another.

Teachers are important because they provide explanation, context and correction. They help students understand where an idea belongs, how scholars have approached it, and where legitimate disagreement exists.

The aim is therefore more than acquiring information. It is to develop Islamic literacy, the ability to understand the religion coherently, recognise sound reasoning and apply knowledge responsibly.





The Diploma course therefore serves as an excellent entry to a nuanced yet fulfilling experience of the Islamic sciences as they relate to both the individual and society in the 21st Century. The modules and material is fully integrated and refined so as to cover core hermeneutical concepts in a graded manner and incorporates life-hacks that make living one's faith a fulfilling experience. The course both contextualises core texts as well as enhances the spiritual aspect of one's religious observance.

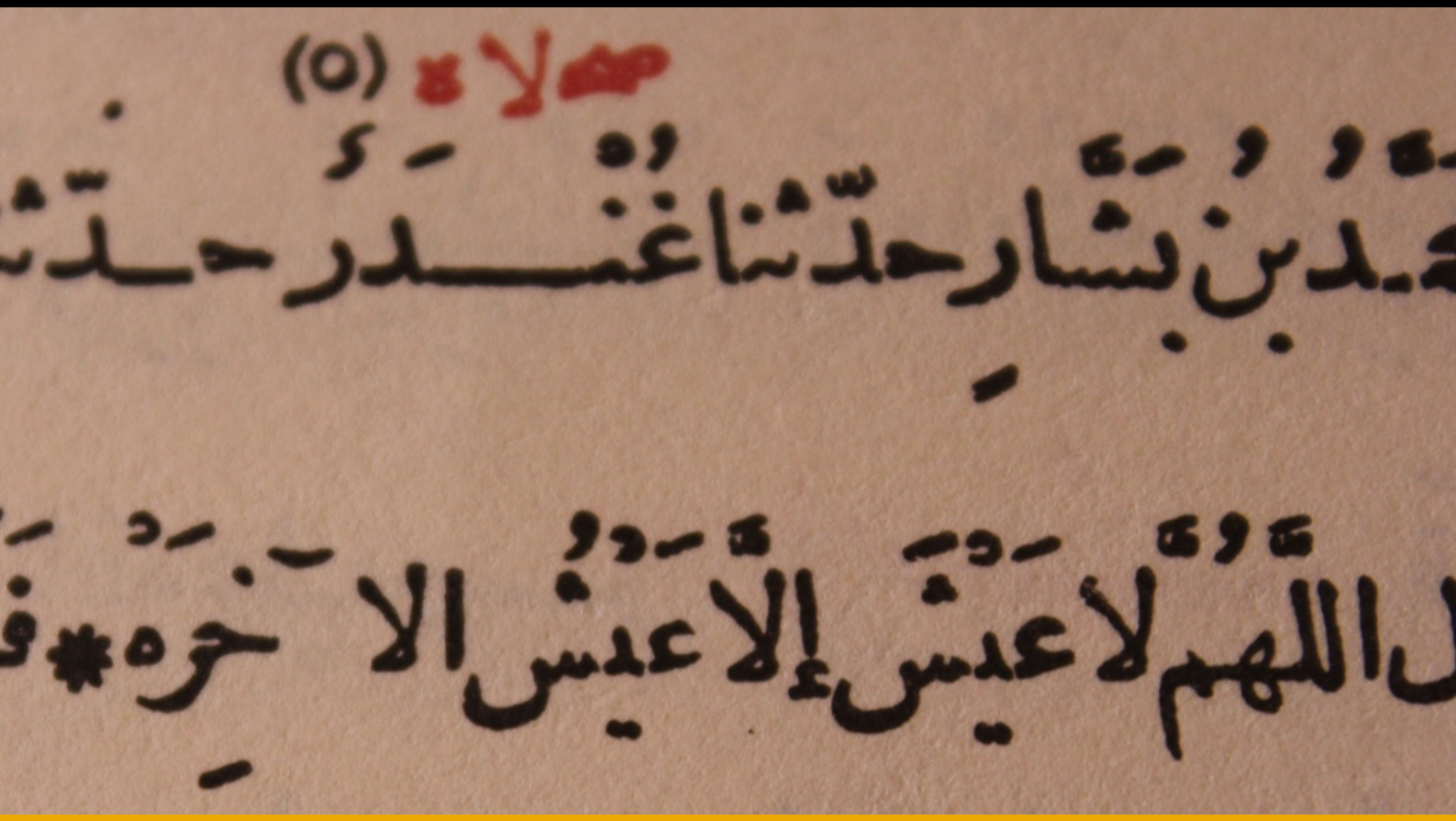
What's important in Planning your Islamic Education?

What is important to ask in this age, when confusion reigns, is: *What is the religious and social function for which students are being prepared, and what will they do with this knowledge?*

To create syllabi that answer to the needs of the age is the pressing challenge for Muslim educationalist. The graded courses we offer sets student's up to be fast tracked if they desire to pursue further studies. Their education with us will ensure they have an efficient roadmap to succeed. It makes their Islamic education relevant and compelling.

The greatest proof of this are the thousands of students that have completed the course. They have gone on to have a clear appreciation of how Islam enriches not just their lives, but those that come in contact with them. Why not experience the Diploma course yourself?

SHAYKH RUZWAN MOHAMMED
iSyllabus Educational Director



For FAQ's on our courses, visit the website
www.isyllabus.org

