

Islam and Secularism — Al-Attas

Islam and Secularism by Shaykh al-Attas is an important work on the intellectual encounter between Islam and secularism represented by the modern West. The book examines the historical roots of secularism, critiques the secularization of knowledge, and explains key Islamic concepts such as *dīn*, justice, ethics, morality, and the Islamic worldview. In response to the intellectual challenges of modernity and secularisation, Al-Attas argues for the recovery of an authentic Islamic framework of knowledge grounded in the notion of *adab*, which Muslims have lost as a consequence of modernity's distortion of our worldview and languages.

LECTURES

(The lectures are based on the 5 chapters of the book)

Lecture 0. Introduction

Lecture 1. The Contemporary Western Christian Background

Lecture 2. Secular-Secularization-Secularism

Lecture 3. Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality

Lecture 4. The Muslim Dilemma

Lecture 5. De-westernization of Knowledge

3 SPECIAL LECTURES:

There will be 3 bonus lectures:

1. On **Shaykh al-Attas'** broader worldview based on his ***Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam.***
2. A presentation on Allama **Fazl Haqq Khayrabadi (d. 1862)** "***Al Rawd al Majood***" which is an exposition of Wahdat al Wujood. I am currently translating the book. More details will be shared later.
3. Perspectives on Secularism: Charles Taylor, Wael Hallaq, Saba Mahmood, Talal Asad

Course Outline

Lecture 0. Introduction

- Course overview
- Structure, expectations, and learning objectives
- Reading materials and recommended resources

Lecture 1. The Contemporary Western Christian Background

- The historical development of Christianity in the West and its encounter with Greek philosophy and Roman civilization.
- The emergence of major theological and intellectual tensions within Western Christianity.
- The rise of modernity and the gradual displacement of religion from the centre of European intellectual life.
- How these developments created the historical conditions for secularization and the modern secular worldview.

Lecture 2. Secular-Secularization-Secularism

- The meanings and historical origins of the terms *secular*, *secularization*, and *secularism*.
- Secularism vs secularisation
- The disenchantment of nature, desacralization of politics, and deconsecration of values.
- Islamisation of the individual and the community

Lecture 3. Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality

- The concept of *din*
- Islamic moral order
- Reason and Revelation

Lecture 4. The Muslim Dilemma

- The challenges faced by Muslims today
- The influence of Western categories, assumptions, and systems of knowledge on Muslim thought.
- The loss of *adab* as the source of confusion in knowledge and loss of intellectual and moral hierarchy
- Al-Attas's diagnosis of the crisis of Muslim education, leadership, and understanding of Islam.

Lecture 5. De-westernization of Knowledge

- The meaning of “de-westernisation”
- Examining the western assumptions embedded in modern disciplines

Special Lecture #1. The Worldview of Shaykh Al-Attas

- On **Shaykh al-Attas'** broader worldview based on his ***Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam***

Special Lecture #2. Fazle Haqq Khayrabadi and Wahdat al-Wujood

- A presentation on Allama **Fazl Haqq Khayrabadi** (d. 1862) ***"Al Rawd al Majood"*** which is an exposition of the doctrine of **Wahdat al Wujood**. I am currently translating the book. More details will be shared later.

Special Lecture #3. What is Secularism(s)?

- Perspectives on Secularism: Charles Taylor, Saba Mahmood, Talal Asad
- Following books will be utilised for this lecture:
 - C. Taylor, *A Secular Age*
 - S. Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age*
 - T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular*

Reading List

1. **Al-Attas**, *Islam and Secularism* (primary read)
2. **Al-Attas**, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*
3. **Al-Attas**, *The Covenants Fulfilled*

For special lectures:

4. **C. Taylor**, *A Secular Age*
5. **S. Mahmood**, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age*
6. **T. Asad**, *Formations of the Secular*

Islam and Secularism Course Schedule

Lecture and Discussion Sessions

(Timings for each and every session: TBD)

Date	Day	Lecture No.	Lecture / Discussion Title
15 November	Sunday	Lecture 0	Introduction to the course and book club
21 November	Saturday	Lecture 1	The Contemporary Western Christian Background
22 November	Sunday	Discussion 1	
28 November	Saturday	Lecture 2	Secular Secularization Secularism
29 November	Sunday	Discussion 2	
5 December	Saturday	Lecture 3	Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality
6 December	Sunday	Discussion 3	
12 December	Saturday	Lecture 4	The Muslim Dilemma
13 December	Sunday	Discussion 4	
19 December	Saturday	Lecture 5	De-westernization of Knowledge
20 December	Sunday	Discussion 5	
26 December	Saturday	Special Lecture 1	On <i>Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam</i>
27 December	Sunday	Special Lecture 2	A presentation on Allama Fazle Haqq Khayrabadi and his <i>AI Rawd al Majud</i>
28 December	Monday	Special Lecture 3	Perspectives on Secularism: Charles

			Taylor, Hallaq, Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood
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REGISTRATION

Fee & Enrollment

- Fee: 5,000/- (18 USD)

Course 3: *Islam and Secularism*

Start: Sunday, 15 November, 2026

End: Sunday, 27 December, 2026.

Apply Here: [Registration Form](#)

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Registered participants will receive a confirmation email with further details.

CONTACT

If you have any queries and questions, feel free to reach out:

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