

https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.28.2025.347			
Received:	15 May 2025	Accepted:	25 August 2025
Revised:	23 June 2025	Published:	15 December 2025
Volume:	28 (December)	Pages:	212-213
To cite:			
Ahmad Sunawari Long. 2025. In memoriam of Professor Khurshid Ahmad. <i>International Journal of Islamic Thought</i> . Vol. 28 (Dec.): 212-213.			

In Memoriam of Professor Khurshid Ahmad (23 March 1932-13 April 2025)

AHMAD SUNAWARI LONG¹



With profound respect and remembrance, the *International Journal of Islamic Thought* honours the life and legacy of Professor Khurshid Ahmad, a pioneering figure in Islamic economics, public policy, and intellectual thought. Born in Delhi, British India, on 23 March 1932, Professor Ahmad was raised in a deeply religious and intellectually vibrant environment. On Sunday, 13 April 2025, he passed away in Leicester, United Kingdom, at the age of 93.

From an early age, he was imbued with Islamic teachings and a passion for knowledge—values that shaped the course of his life. The turbulence of the Partition in 1947 marked a significant turning point, as his family migrated to Pakistan. There, he pursued his education with distinction, earning his bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from the University of Punjab. During this formative period, the writings of Syed Abul A'la Maududi left an indelible impact on him, inspiring his vision of Islam as a comprehensive way of life. As often noted, “*He was to Maulana Maududi what Engels was to Marx.*”

Seeking to further refine his intellectual foundations, Professor Khurshid moved to the United Kingdom in the 1950s, where he completed a master's degree and subsequently a Ph.D. at the University of Leicester. His academic experience in the West further deepened his resolve to articulate an Islamic response to contemporary economic challenges, integrating spiritual and ethical dimensions into modern economic thought. Upon his return to Pakistan, Professor Khurshid devoted himself to the practical application of Islamic principles in governance and policy. As Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Pakistan, he played a pivotal role in formulating national policies grounded in justice, equity, and ethical governance. He was the founder of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), which has since served as a beacon of independent Islamic research and critical thought. As a senior leader of Jamaat-e-Islami and a Senator, he consistently championed the integration of Islamic ethics into public life.

¹ **Ahmad Sunawari Long**, Ph. D., Editor-in-Chief and Founder of *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, Research Centre for Theology and Philosophy, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600, Bangi, Selangor, MALAYSIA. Email: ijit@ukm.edu.my, [ORCID iD: 0000-0002-4132-9756].

In the United Kingdom, Professor Khurshid's contributions were equally profound. In 1973, he co-founded the Islamic Foundation in Leicestershire with his close associate Khurram Murad. Serving as its founding chairman for over two decades, he was instrumental in establishing the Foundation as a leading centre of Islamic scholarship, research, and education. Under his leadership, the Foundation became a prominent institution for intellectual engagement, significantly enhancing the understanding of Islam in the West and contributing to the development of British Muslim identity and thought. Until the time of his passing, Professor Khurshid remained actively connected to the Foundation.

In the domain of academic leadership, Professor Khurshid rendered distinguished service across several eminent appointments. From 1976 to 1983, he served as Advisor to King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and concurrently, from 1979 to 1983, as a Member of the Supreme Advisory Council of the International Centre for Research in Islamic Economics at the same university. His commitment to advancing Islamic economics was further exemplified through his tenure as Chairman of the International Institute of Islamic Economics at the International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan (1983–1987). He also held the esteemed positions of Vice Chancellor at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and Rector of the Markfield Institute of Higher Education in the United Kingdom, leaving an enduring legacy of scholarly excellence and institutional development.

Professor Khurshid's scholarly contributions are monumental, establishing him as a pioneer in defining Islamic economics as a distinct and recognized academic discipline. His vision of economic justice is deeply rooted in the principles of Shariah, emphasizing fairness and equity in economic transactions. He advocated for economic systems that prioritize social welfare and ensure equitable distribution of wealth to alleviate poverty and uplift the marginalized. His uncompromising opposition to *riba* (interest) was based on his belief that interest-based transactions engender exploitation and economic inequality.

Central to his framework was the pivotal role of *zakat*—the obligatory Islamic almsgiving—which he viewed as both a social safety net and an instrument for wealth redistribution. He underscored its significance in addressing socio-economic disparities and in reinforcing the social responsibilities of individuals and businesses. Moreover, Professor Khurshid championed the concept of ethical investment, urging that economic activities align with Islamic moral values and contribute positively to societal welfare.

Professor Khurshid was a prolific author, having written more than seventy books in English and Urdu. Among his notable works are *Studies in Islamic Economics* (1980), *Towards a Monetary and Fiscal System of Islam* (1981), *Economic Development in an Islamic Framework* (1979), *Islamic Approach to Development: Some Policy Implications* (1994), and *The Contemporary Economic Challenges and Islam* (2002).

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to Islamic economics, education, and public service, Professor Khurshid received numerous prestigious awards. These include the *Nishan-e-Imtiaz* (2011), Pakistan's highest civilian award; the *King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam* (1990), for his foundational work in Islamic scholarship and for establishing the Islamic Foundation in Leicester; the *Islamic Development Bank Prize for Islamic Economics* (1989), for his pioneering role in developing Islamic economic thought and institutions; the *LaRiba Award* (1998), presented by the American Finance House for his contributions to interest-free financial systems; and the *Turkey's Islamic Economics Award* (2022), awarded by the Islamic Economics Research Centre (IKAM) in Istanbul, honouring his lifelong service to Islamic economics and finance.

Professor Khurshid was also conferred several honorary doctorates in recognition of his scholarly excellence and societal contributions. These include an *Honorary Doctorate in Education* (1970) from the University of Leicester, an *Honorary Doctorate in Literature* (2003) from Loughborough University, an *Honorary Doctorate in Education* (1982) from the University of Malaya, and an *Honorary Doctorate in Islamic Economics* from the International Islamic University Malaysia (2006).

May Allah accept his deeds, forgive his shortcomings, and grant him the highest place in Jannah.