

**Call for Papers**  
**Thinking with Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas:**  
**Islam, Knowledge, and Decolonial Futures**

Centre for Study & Research, New Delhi

The Centre for Study & Research, New Delhi, invites abstracts and papers for an international conference on the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1931–2026), one of the most significant Muslim philosophers of the modern period. Marking his recent passing and the enduring relevance of his work, this conference seeks to critically engage his concepts of *adab*, *ta'dib*, the Islamisation of knowledge, and his far-reaching critique of secularism, modernity, and the postcolonial condition.

## **Background and Rationale**

Al-Attas developed a comprehensive philosophy of education and civilisation rooted in Islamic metaphysics, centring the unity of God (*tawhid*) as the axis around which all knowledge ought to be ordered. His notion of *adab*, the proper ordering of the self in relation to God, knowledge, society, and the cosmos, offered not just an ethical code but a civilizational project aimed at restoring harmony between knowing, being, and acting.

Through his influential idea of the “Islamisation of knowledge,” al-Attas argued that the modern Muslim crisis is fundamentally an epistemological one: the uncritical adoption of Western secular categories, disciplines, and institutions has led to confusion in the Muslim mind regarding the nature of reality, knowledge, and human purpose. His work has thus been read as a distinctly Islamic response to the colonality of knowledge and a foundational contribution to debates on decolonising education, science, and the university.

At a time when decolonial, postcolonial, and critical theories of knowledge are being discussed across the humanities and social sciences, revisiting al-Attas opens up fertile ground for South–South conversations on epistemic justice, spiritual intelligence, and alternative modernities.

## **Indicative Themes**

We welcome theoretically grounded as well as empirically informed papers that extend, or critically interrogate al-Attas’s work which goes beyond rhetorical paraphrasing exercises. It is important that the papers should add to the existing critique or synthesis

on al-Atta's intellectual contribution and add new knowledge. Possible (but not exclusive) sub-themes include:

1. Conceptual and philosophical engagements
  - a. *Adab, ta'dib*, and the idea of the “educated person” in al-Attas
  - b. Islamisation of knowledge and decolonisation of the university
  - c. Al-Attas on metaphysics, language, and the ordering of reality
  - d. His critique of secularism, secularisation, and Eurocentric universalism
2. Al-Attas and decolonial thought
  - a. Convergences and tensions with Latin American decolonial theorists (Quijano, Mignolo, Dussel)
  - b. Dialogues with Fanon, Mbembe, Said: coloniality, subjectivity, and spiritual alienation
  - c. Al-Attas, Islamisation of knowledge, and projects of epistemic disobedience
3. Education, pedagogy, and institutions
  - a. Al-Attas’s philosophy of Islamic education as *ta'dib* in contemporary schooling and higher education
  - b. Case studies of curricula, madrasas, universities, or institutes inspired by his ideas (e.g., ISTAC, CASIS)
  - c. Teacher formation, moral-intellectual discipline, and character education in his framework
4. Islam, science, and modern disciplines
  - a. Islamisation of the natural and social sciences: possibilities, limits, and critiques
  - b. Comparative readings: al-Attas and Nasr, al-Faruqi, Sardar on Islam and science
  - c. Al-Attas’s approach to history, philology, and the Islamisation of the Malay world

Contributions that place al-Attas in conversation with Indian, South Asian, African, or other Asian Muslim experiences, especially in relation to knowledge, education, and decolonial struggles, are particularly encouraged.

## **Formats and Eligibility**

- The call is open to Academicians, scholars, doctoral and independent researchers, with strong conceptual work.
- Disciplinary backgrounds may include (but are not limited to) Islamic studies, philosophy, theology, education, sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, history, and others.

## Submission Guidelines

- Abstracts:
  - Length: 250–350 words
  - Include: title, 4–5 keywords, brief author bio (70 -100words) with institutional affiliation and email.
  - Font: Times New Roman
- Full papers (after abstract acceptance):
  - Length: 7,000-10,000 words (including references) for consideration in a post-conference publication.
  - Referencing style: APA 7
- Languages:
  - Abstracts and papers may be submitted in English.

Please submit abstracts only in Word format to: [info@csrindia.org](mailto:info@csrindia.org) with the subject line: “CFP – Al-Attas Symposium – [Your Name]”.

## Important Dates

- Abstract submission deadline: June 30 2026
- Notification of acceptance: July 30th 2026
- Full paper submission (for publication consideration): Nov 10th 2026
- Conference dates: 25,26th March 2026
- Venue: Centre for Study & Research, New Delhi (with online/hybrid participation options, subject to confirmation).

## Publication Plans

Selected papers may be considered for publication in an edited volume or a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal associated with the Centre for Study & Research, subject to standard review processes. Further details will be shared after the conference.

## Contact

For queries regarding the call, logistics, or concept note, please contact:

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