



THE INSTITUTE FOR
MUSLIM ADVANCEMENT
AND RENEWAL

Blueprint

*Fitrah: Divine Foundations for
Understanding the Self*

20
26

Call for
Submissions

All people are born with a balanced *fitrah*, a natural state that is directly connected to Allah and desires closeness to the Creator.

As we are exposed to different values, messages, and experiences in the *dunya*, our worldly lives, the balance of the *fitrah* can become skewed. The clarity with which we see our purpose—to achieve lasting peace and happiness with our Creator—becomes clouded.

The *qalb*, or spiritual heart, is the center of our being and the seat of awareness. It reflects the state of the *fitrah*. The *nafs* is the lower self. It experiences desires and impulses that can draw the heart toward or away from its true purpose. The *'aql*, the intellect, discerns and reasons, helping us choose rightly. When the heart is sound and the *nafs* disciplined, the *fitrah* shines forth, guiding us back to Allah.

Secular frameworks for assessing and treating mental health do not recognize the *fitrah*, and therefore lack a critical component for providing meaningful counsel and care for Muslims, and even non-Muslims. Recognizing the human *fitrah* changes how we understand mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Imagine a world in which each individual understands that we are inextricably linked to the Most Merciful, All-Knowing Creator of the universe.

The Fitrah as a Link to the Divine

The Islamic framework for the soul has the potential to transform how you perceive yourself, your goals and motivations, your actions and behaviors, and your emotions. Further, realizing each individual's innate link to the Creator can impact how you interact with others and make sense of their actions.

Reflect upon the fitrah and the broader Islamic framework for understanding the self. Submit an original written work or work of art reflecting your understanding.

Suggested prompts:

1. What do I know about the Islamic framework of the soul? What questions do I have?
2. How do I respond to challenges and setbacks? What do my emotional responses and actions reveal about the state of my heart? How can I use these experiences as opportunities for growth?
3. What support systems have influenced my mental wellbeing (family, community, therapists, etc.)? In what ways have they been helpful? In what ways have they been deficient?
4. How do I respond to the transgressions and mistakes of others? Am I forgiving, resentful, vengeful, or passive? How have my past responses impacted my wellbeing? How might an Islamic understanding of the soul change my default response?

Submission Guidelines

Who can submit?

Anyone 18 and under with something to say! Group projects with up to 4 contributors will be accepted.

Do I have to write an essay?

No. While an essay is one possible way to respond we welcome a variety of submissions. Some possibilities include:

- Research papers
- Personal essay
- Book report on a text related to the topic
- Poetry
- Short stories
- Original artwork
- Video
- Song

Do I have to select one of the suggested prompts?

No. IMAR welcomes your creativity and authenticity. You may email info@imar.org to propose an alternate topic or format directly related to the theme.

Do I have to present my work?

Some submissions may be selected for presentation at our first annual symposium. IMAR may publish some or all works in a journal or other format at the organization's discretion.

Submission Process

Phase 1: Call for Submissions

Submit an Intent to Submit form by **October 31, 2025**. If you are proposing an alternate topic.

Phase 2: Submission

Submit the first draft of your submission by **December 31, 2025**.

Phase 3: Review and Revision (February to March 2026)

You will receive comments and a revision timeline.

Phase 4: Workshop and Peer Review (March to April 2026)

Contributors will be invited to share their work with each other and provide helpful feedback.

Phase 5: Final Submissions (May 2026)

Final submissions are due and select contributors will present at the IMAR Symposium.

