

The book cover features a central dark grey panel with white text. This panel is flanked by two vertical strips of light-colored, textured fabric with intricate floral patterns. The left strip shows a cluster of orange and red flowers with green leaves. The right strip shows a large, detailed orange and red flower with green leaves. The central text is centered and reads: "Entering into Sukūn" in a large serif font, followed by "with Ghada Ayesh" and "Office of the Registrar" in a smaller serif font, separated by a thin horizontal line.

Entering into Sukūn

with
Ghada Ayesh
Office of the Registrar



With a degree in Business Administration and Education, Ghada brings her unique skill sets to her job as college registrar. There are many institutions that she has worked for, yet, she chose Darul Qasim College because,

“I feel a sukūn here that I didn’t feel anywhere else. I find sukūn when I’m on-campus helping students. I feel more reward here than I have ever felt in any of the other activities that I used to do. I’m helping these students in their quest for more knowledge. I have a little hand in it and that brings me joy. Alḥamdulillah.”

From the perspective of a college registrar, Ghada shares with us the uniqueness of this academic environment. Looking at the American educational landscape, many students of higher education are suffering from anxiety, depression, and learning experiences that neglect the development of the human being. In this larger context, Ghada's focus on sukūn becomes extremely compelling and transformative. Shaykh Amin's words bring an added forcefulness to Ghada's reflections.

“Education is not just about teaching people information, it's about developing a person. It's about bringing out the human being in the human being.”



This focus on developing the person is further explained by Ghada as she highlights some of the unique aspects of this collegiate environment. “Here there is the opportunity for growth. You can keep going. You don’t have to stop after 1, 2, or 4 years. You have the opportunity to continue learning. Even our faculty study with each other and Shaykh Amin. There’s no end to it, mā shā’ Allah. In other institutions, once you’re done with the program, you stop. Here you can finish a program and continue learning even past the program requirements.”



“Another unique aspect about the college is equality in the ability to access Islamic content. You don’t feel because you’re of a certain background or you have a certain style that you are restricted. Whether you are a male, female, 20 years old, or 50 years old, it’s equal access across the board. I think that’s very rare in Islamic institutions. To walk in and see that ladies and men are in the same room, respectfully separated and treated with the utmost respect, and everybody is getting the same content with no division.”



“What we do have is what I like to call a respective division. For example, female faculty and students have their own lounge. They have their own space because we want them to feel comfortable. I always invite prospective students to visit the campus for a day. We’ll team them up with a student mentor that has their similar background. They have the opportunity to sit in the classroom to hear and see what’s going on. This helps in breaking down that barrier and misconceptions they may have.”



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“I get phone calls and emails from potential students saying, ‘What kind of programs do you have for ‘ālimat? I am an ‘ālima and I want to study more, what do you have?’ I say, ‘We have the same thing we have for the ‘ālim program.’ I’ll get this little bit of silence and they will be like, ‘na’am, what?’ And I say, ‘yes, it’s the same program!’

If it’s via email, I’ll send potential female students to the program page on the website and tell them all courses and programs are equally accessible to all.”



"I think a lot of these misconceptions have to do with the number of female teachers. We don't have a large number and they assume there must not be a lot of female students. However, the number of female students is starting to slowly catch up with the number of males these days.

In the Spring of 2022 we had 51 female students to 110 male students. This semester (Spring 2023), there are 81 female students to 117 male students *mā shā' Allah*. So the female students are going up in numbers.

Currently, we have 4 female applicants to one male applicant!"



Ghada's excitement is palpable. Numbers speak volumes. Yet, she chooses to end this tour with the confidence restoring words of college president, Shaykh Mohammed Amin Kholwadia. It is through his leadership, training, and focus on the development of the human being that staff like Ghada Ayesh not only enter into sukūn, but carry it in their being to the benefit of the college. The Willow's Shade is indeed accessible to all those who seek it.



“Shaykh Amin said something that has stuck with me ever since. He said that the female staff and teachers at Darul Qasim College are worth their weight in gold. And they should have whatever education that they desire from Darul Qasim.”