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**The Bionic
Woman**
+ 21

**Becoming Healthy
Successfully**
+ 29

**That is how Allah
wants us to care**
+ 34

*... Allah does not change
a people's lot unless
they change what is in
their hearts...*

[The Qur'an 13:11].



**HURRY
TO
SUCCESS**

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Islam: A Complete Holistic System



By Dr. Sayyid Musa Alkazimi

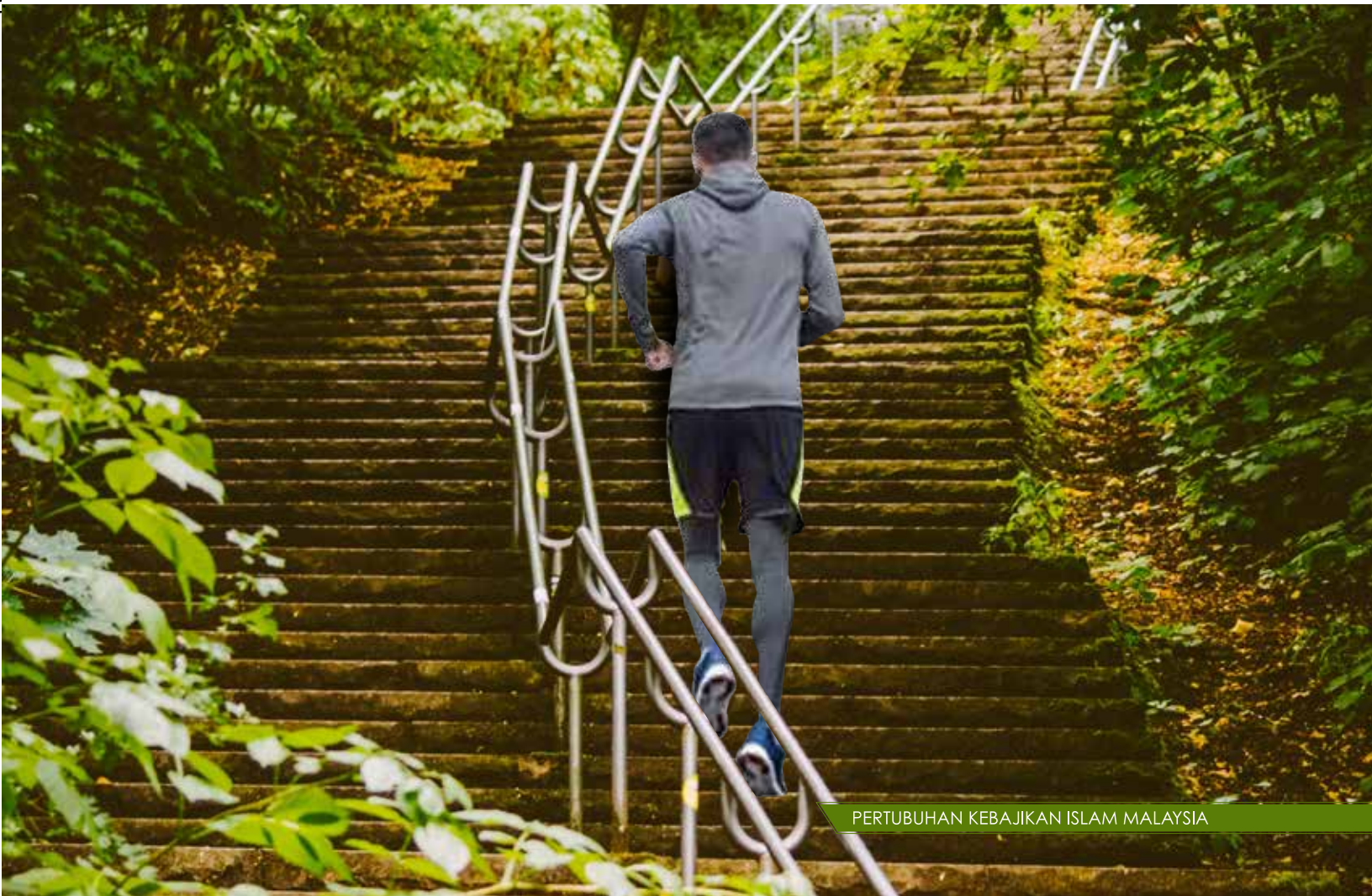
The entire universe is created by God. Everyone and everything belongs to the Creator - The Almighty God. There should be no discrimination among mankind, all are from One God, one Father and one Mother, Adam and Hawa (a.s.).

The Almighty Creator has an intention for His creation, of all and everything. The Almighty God - Allah, prescribed a way of life for the entire mankind. He created the first Man - Adam (a.s.) who is the first father of mankind. Allah (s.w.t) appointed more than 124 thousand Prophets to guide mankind, from time to time with revelations.

Revealed knowledge is perfect and is for the entire mankind. This knowledge is from the Creator Himself and only revealed knowledge is errorless, flawless and perfect.

To every nation Allah appointed Prophets with revelations (*wahyu*) as guidance to conduct their lives.

All prophets were teaching and guiding their people to achieve success through submitting to the laws of the Creator. Revealed knowledge is a perfect guidance for man to administer this world and also to administer his own life to achieve success and victory.



The Almighty God appointed the Prophets to establish a peaceful way of life with justice. History proves whoever obeyed God and accepted the revelations and practiced it, achieved success.

Islam means submission to the Creator to achieve success and to attain a peaceful life, both in this world as well as the life hereafter.

Almighty God - Allah is the Creator of the whole of mankind and Prophet Adam (a.s.) is the father of the entire humankind. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) is the final prophet and Messenger of the Creator for the whole of mankind.

Almighty Allah (s.w.t.) decided to formulate the perfect way of life for the whole of mankind through His final revelation - a perfect guidance and way of life. This is the complete, formulated form of the entire mission of all the prophets of Allah which reached every nation.

Where is the mission of every Prophet of every nation since their existence? Does it still exist? The answer is 'YES', and that is Islam - A way of life, submitting to the Creator to achieve success physically, socially and spiritually, towards establishing Universal Peace. In Arabic this is known as ISLAM.

Islam is a universal call and Universal Peace, perfect to everyone for all times. Peace will remain in its own identity as a truth in this Universe.

There is no need to compel anyone to accept Peace, as every Peace-loving soul will search for Peace and stand for Peace. Islam is only guiding us to Peace and how to achieve Peace in its entirety. There is no compulsion on others, but compassionate co-existence of every soul in this Universe is the mission of Islam.

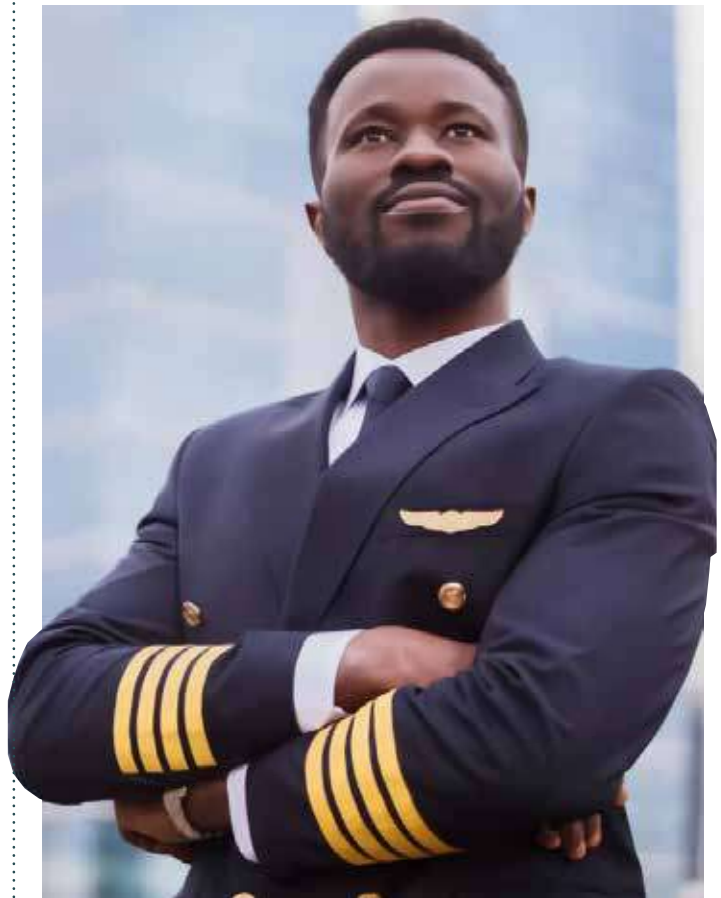
Islam is Peace and Peace is a symbol of success. Strive and struggle to recognize and eradicate the enemies of mankind (such as our lower desires and Shaytan) which is the ultimate aim of Islam. Islam believes that only through Compassion and guidance can peace and stability be established on earth.

Islamic Herald would like to share with our respected readers that Islam recognized and

realized that we have three major and dangerous enemies which prevent man from achieving peace and stability i.e. (1) ignorance (2) poverty and (3) sickness/disease.

Ignorance

The Qur'an is the final book of guidance to the entire universe which begins with uncompromising mission to eradication ignorance. The Qur'an at its very first words of revelation says: '*Iqra*': Read [The Qur'an 96:1].



The Qur'an is a Book which announces to the world that ignorance is an obvious enemy of mankind. Islam made it obligatory on every individual to seek knowledge and grants the highest station for those who have gained knowledge. Islam resists ignorance and will remain a vivid enemy of ignorance (Jahala). Knowledge is divine and so it should be sought and gained with pure intention.

Poverty

Islam prescribed on every Muslims to work hard and Islam prohibited laziness. Islam stands with a principle of hard work and earn as much as possible in permissible ways as though you will never die and strive and struggle to achieve felicity in the life hereafter as though you will die tomorrow. What beauty! Success in *Dunya* and success in *Aakhirah*, united in a balance.



The Qur'an emphasizes on hard-work productivity, both physically and spiritually.

Islam made obligation on every individual to be productive, work hard, earn, spend, contribute and upkeep justice and establish universal welfare through economic stability. The zakat system is a universal call of welfare and individual's responsibility is to work hard to become rich, giving zakat (alms) and eradicate poverty.

Sickness

Without good health, peace is impossible. Islamic meaning of peace is comprehensive. Staying healthy is a religious obligation and duty-bound on every Muslim.

Mankind in the present century is suffering from multiple kinds of man-made diseases. The social disease -corruption- is rampant and mankind has become pathetic victims. The cause of all these sufferings are self-made by man himself.

The environment, food, drink, medicines and medications, the social system and psychological instability, industrial growth and job stress and much more ... all are corrupted by humans and contributes to self-destruction and an unbalanced life. Allah (s.w.t.) created and established balance, but mankind destroys the very balance which he should maintain.



Nature is poisoned and humans are sick and there is no single space in this universe where man can seek asylum. It is dangerous disaster and if we don't change our character and attitude, every human in this planet will become sick and subject to a slow or sudden pitiful death.

Allah says:

Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the deed) that the hands of men have earned, that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil).

[The Qur'an 30:41]

Let us strive and struggle to eradicate ignorance, poverty and disease through transforming ourselves to become healthy, wealthy, knowledgeable and ever happy citizens of this Universe.

Dr Sayyid Musa Alkazimi

Editor

Head of Research IDIP-KL

Malays cannot do Science

By *Mr Adam bin Mohd Ibrahim*



"Malays cannot do Science"---that remark by an insensitive teacher whilst he was in Form 4 Science at high school and being one of only 4 Malays in his class, was amongst the factors that drove a young Abdul Samad bin Sakijan to push himself even further to improve himself and to prove that teacher wrong. As a boy and young man, he had always pushed himself hard to improve himself, but this was added incentive for him, and now more than half a century later, he still recalls that incident with some measure of pride that he had proven, at least to himself, that Malays can 'do Science'.

Getting him to open up on his early life was not easily achieved and it was only the prompting of his wife, Datin Dr. Ilina Isahak, that persuaded him to finally 'spill his story'. What a fascinating story it turned out to be.



Coming from an impoverished family in a remote kampong on the outskirts of Muar, Johore, he used to help his parents tap rubber in the wee hours of the morning before cycling to school. Being the second eldest amongst his siblings, there were times too when he prepared meals for the family before leaving for school. So difficult was life then that he recalls the family being unable to buy him school clothing and instead they would buy cloth and his mother would cut up the cloth and stitch together the school uniform for him and his siblings.

His house then consisted of just one room with a zinc roof overhead and they had to make do with a little pondok located a short distance away for toilet facilities.

Travelling to and from school itself posed many challenges to him. The first mile and a half was on an uneven laterite path leading out of the kampong, often containing sprinklings of cow manure that proved amongst the many hazards, before reaching the tarred road that was six and a half miles away from his school. He often had to leave home two hours earlier to be at school on time.

The kampong then had no electricity and there were times he had to cycle back from school when it was pitch dark, his way lit up only by his bicycle lamp. He now laughs recalling the few occasions when he fell from his bicycle causing the dynamo-powered lamp to stop functioning and leaving him in absolute darkness, having only the eerie sounds found in remote kampongs to keep him company. He recalls too the few times that he fell from his bicycle into the stream running parallel to the kampong path, leaving him totally drenched. At other times, that same stream served as his playground and a place to fish.

We all have steps to climb,
the most important thing is
to keep climbing.

[Kevin Hall]



Being of Javanese descent, it was at school that he first learnt the Malay language and it was not till he was in the fourth grade that he started to learn English.

Living in a relatively remote kampong comprising mainly of rubber tappers, Abdul Samad wanted to improve his lot. It was somewhat amusing to learn that his early ambition was to become a clerk in a government department. He had once accompanied his father to the land office in Muar and was so impressed that a clerk worked in a proper office that even had a fan rather than in the heat amongst rubber trees, that he decided that it was the job for him. His other ambition then was to become a train driver. Little did he know then that Allah (s.w.t.) had other plans for him.

When asked what motivated him to work hard, his answer was that he was determined to be better than the situation he then found himself in. Driven by his determination to improve his lot, he often used to stay up alone till midnight, pouring over and over his school textbooks under the wavering light of a kerosene lamp, whilst the rest of the kampong folk slept and having only the eerie hooting of owls for company. He had

a fondness for Mathematics and would often prepare for his class by reading up ahead of what the teacher would teach so that the class lessons served more as a revision exercise for him. His efforts bore fruit and it was when he was in the sixth form that he first entertained the idea of becoming a doctor.

His hard work paid off and he entered the University of Malaya medical faculty in 1972. It was there that he met his wife, Datin Ilina, who was also pursuing the same course. He recounts how he used to study diligently 6 days a week and had very little time for anything else. 5 years later he obtained a MBBS degree and qualified as a doctor.

He commenced work as a houseman at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital in 1977, before joining Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia as a medical officer. In 1979 he left for London to pursue specialisation as a radiologist and was attached to the Hammersmith Hospital, London for 3 years. Not long after his return to Malaysia a private hospital tried to lure him to join their ranks, assuring him of a fabulous income, but he turned them down, preferring instead to serve the public at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital.



Today Dato Dr. Abdul Samad bin Sakijan is recognised, both locally and internationally, as amongst the foremost radiologists in Malaysia. His peers often seek his advice and diagnosis on cases handled by them and he has presented many papers at seminars and conferences and also made contributions to medical journals. He is a member of the FRCR (Fellow of the Royal College of Radiologists, United Kingdom) and had served as a lecturer and Professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. He is currently the consultant radiologist at a private hospital in Kuala Lumpur as well as a visiting consultant radiologist at the National Heart Institute.

Amongst those he has attended to have been Sultans and other members of royalty as well as Government leaders and Cabinet Ministers. In recognition of his contributions to the field of medicine, he was awarded the Darjah Indera Makhota Pahang (DIMP) by the Sultan of Pahang in 1991 and in 1994 was awarded the Dato' Paduka Makhota Perak (DPMP) by the Sultan of Perak.

In February, 2019 at the 14th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Asia Pacific Society of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology, Dato Dr Abdul Samad was one of three gold medal award recipients for his extraordinary support and contribution in the field of cardiovascular and interventional radiology, the other two being from China and Japan. In an article on healthcare in Malaysia published by the Biomedical Imaging and Intervention Journal, Dato Dr Abdul Samad was described as being "the 'father' of interventional radiology in Malaysia" and also as the "role model who inspired the younger radiologists with his passion, knowledge, skills and dedication."

Through it all and despite his many achievements, Dato Dr. Abdul Samad remains very much a simple down-to-earth person. He sees no need to decorate himself with the fineries that life has to offer, even though he can now well afford them. He remains casual in his lifestyle and is totally dedicated to his work. Often found in casual attire

with sandals for footwear, I was not surprised to learn from one of his patients, Muhammad Khalil, how he was taken aback when he found out that the person whom he had spoken to was not the hospital assistant he had thought him to be but was instead the Specialist Head of the Radiology Unit at the hospital.

Dato Dr. Abdul Samad also has a caring side to him. His staff at the hospital have their daily lunch at the hospital paid for by him and he has been known to exempt needy patients from any medical charges. His dedication to his work is illustrated by the occasion when once, during Eid Fitri and on his way with his family to Muar to visit his parents, he unhesitatingly swung his car around and returned to Kuala Lumpur to attend to a patient upon receiving an urgent telephone call from the hospital. He is often one of the last to leave the hospital to return home from work and there has been occasion when he has returned to the hospital later at night when he is needed.

To him his success and wealth are gifts given to him by Allah (s.w.t.), to be shared by those around him and indeed he is known to be extremely generous with family and friends. He performed the hajj together with his wife in 1998, and together they have two children.

Dato Dr. Abdul Samad bin Sakijan serves as a beacon of light to fellow Malays and Muslims who undergo difficult times in trying to improve themselves. Through sheer hard work, dedication and single-minded devotion to his chosen field, he has shown that success, God willing, is never far away. He also shows that as a good Muslim, achieving excellence in one's work in serving others rather than materialistic factors ought to be the paramount consideration.

Mr Adam bin Mohd Ibrahim

Advocate & Solicitor



حي على الفلاح

(Hayya 'alal-Falāh)

Hurry to success



By Khadijah Dingjan

Five times a day the phrase 'Hayya 'alal-Falāh' is heard from the masjid or surau during the call for prayer. It is usually translated as "come to success", "rush to success" or "hurry to salvation". But what is considered success, is very subjective and vary from person to person. Some consider success to be abundance of wealth, or perhaps good health, others might argue it is happiness or a stress-free life.



Many of us are struggling and striving towards one common goal; success. Whether it is in regard to our business, family, other relationships, career, religious goals, or academics, we all try to achieve the best, because we assume that a successful life automatically means we will be happy, contented and at peace.

A dictionary might give us a definition such as success is: "the fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect, or fame". But this definition is only related to temporarily worldly success.

Google defines success more generally as "the accomplishment of an aim or a purpose". As opposed to its opposite: failure; failure to accomplish the aim or purpose.

And **falāh** (فلاح) in Arabic, used in the call for prayer, does mean success (especially in regard to self-improvement), happiness and well-being in this world (*Dunya*) and the next (*Aakhirah*).

So I was wondering what does success mean according to our Creator? In God's last revelation -the Qur'an- the word success (and related words) are mentioned in around forty places. Let us explore a few of them:

BELIEVE AND FOLLOW THE GUIDANCE

In the beginning surah al-Baqarah, the *muflihoon* (successful people) are described:

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who have taqwa',

who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them,

And who believe in the Revelation sent to you (O Muhammad), and sent before you, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter.

They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will be successful. [The Qur'an 2:2-5]

1. Having taqwa' of Allah

It means being conscious of Allah, being aware that He sees and hears everything, even our thoughts. If we are really aware that Allah is watching us 24/7, it helps us to keep ourselves in check throughout our life; that is how powerful taqwa' is.

Allah promises that taqwa' leads to success:

O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; and vie in such perseverance, and strengthen each other, and remain conscious of Allah (taqwa'), so that you might attain success!

[The Qur'an 3:200]

Rasulullah (s.a.w.) said:

"Worship Allah as if you see Him. If you cannot see Him, then indeed Allah sees you." [al-Bukhari]

The opposite is also true: The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

One of the sayings of the early Prophets which the people have got is: If you don't feel hayaa*, do whatever you like."

[al-Bukhari]

Hayaa' is a pious shyness from committing religious indiscretions, often translated as ashamed.

2. The one who believes in the Unseen

The Unseen comprises of other creatures (Angels, Jinns) we cannot see, but also e.g. the Hereafter; Paradise and Hell. As mentioned in previous scriptures, in the authentic sources of Islam, Allah clearly stresses the existence of eternal life in the Hereafter. This fact is very healthy for us as it brings our worldly life and its problems into perspective.

Even though many of us believe in Paradise and Hell, how often do we remind ourselves of this in our daily activities? Do we feel guilty, when missing a prayer? Do we promise Allah never to miss another prayer again. The more we remind ourselves of the Unseen, the stronger our will-power becomes to work diligently for Paradise.



With courtesy of Umar Mirza (IG)

3. Being Steadfast in Prayer

This includes praying on time with *khushoo* (attentively) and cleansing our heart and mind of worldly distractions and thus focusing on Allah alone.

The prayer (*salah*) is our most important action of acknowledgement & gratitude towards our Creator, although we cannot thank Him enough for the immeasurable blessings we receive every minute.

Allah the Almighty has prepared success for those who observe their prayer regularly:

Successful indeed are the believers: Who are humble in their prayers.

[The Qur'an 23:1-2]

The prayer leads to the path of Allah's satisfaction and becoming a candidate for His Mercy. Thus, someone is really successful, when she/he is a good performer of prayer, showing diligence in observing it in congregation.

O you who believe, bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord and do good - that you may succeed.

[The Qur'an 22:77]

This is exactly what we are called to when we hear the call to prayer (*adhān*) called from the minaret of the masjid or surau: *hayya alas-Salāh, hayya 'alal Falāh*: Hurry towards the prayer, hurry towards success!

The following hadith Qudsi shows why the prayer is so important:

Rasulullah (s.a.w.) said:

Allah (s.w.t.) says: The first of his actions for which a servant of Allah will be held accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order, then he will have prospered and succeeded: and if they are wanting, then he will have failed and lost. [at-Tirmidhi]

4. Spending in charity

Besides purifying our wealth, zakāh (alms to the poor) and general charity also leads to success:

... those who are saved from their own souls' greed are truly successful.

[The Qur'an 59:9]

Spending charity on relatives, the poor and needy people are amongst the causes of success:

Give relatives their due, and the poor and the travellers. That is best for those who seek the pleasure of Allah. They are the ones who are successful.

[The Qur'an 30:38]

Many Muslims give their zakat in the blessed month of Ramadan, but this good deed is not limited to the month of Ramadan alone, the doors of success are open throughout the year, and giving charity is one of the most beautiful means to achieve success.



5. Believe in and follow the Qur'an and the last Messenger of God

Allah (s.w.t.) gives also glad tidings to those who follow Rasulullah (s.w.t.) and follow what was revealed to him:

... Then those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful. [The Qur'an 7:157]

6. Certainty about the Hereafter

The people who are successful are convinced and have a firm belief in the life to come as mentioned in the *ayah* in the beginning of this article. Just as The Qur'an is informing us about the promise of the Hereafter, other Scriptures also mention it. In fact, all the Prophets had this topic as their main message.

In other ayāt of the Qur'an The Creator of the heavens and the earth emphasised that successful people are those who are performing good deeds:

WHAT ARE GOOD DEEDS?

7. Good deeds

We are deemed successful according to our Creator, if our scales of good deeds are heavy on the Day of Judgment. Thus, they shall, by Allah's favour, be from amongst the successful.

Those whose good deeds weigh heavy will be successful. [The Qur'an 23:102]

And to be more precise; if our records of good deeds becomes heavier than our records of bad deeds, then our efforts in this worldly life has been successful and we have attained the ultimate success. Rasulullah (s.a.w) explained that:

Nothing is placed on the scale that is heavier than good character. [at-Tirmidhi]

Moreover, whoever purifies her/his heart with e.g. prayer and good conduct will be successful, Allah (s.w.t.) says:

He indeed shall be successful who purifies himself." [The Qur'an 87:14]



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8. Calling others to goodness is also from the good deeds of successful people:

Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right (al-Ma'ruf), and forbids what is wrong (al-Munkar): those who do this are the successful ones.

[The Qur'an 3:104]

Among the wrong deeds in the category "forbidden the wrong (*munkar*)" are:

9. Not using riba (interest, usury), intoxicants, gambling

It is mentioned in the Qur'an, that success (*falāḥ*) is indeed connected to the avoidance of *riba* (interest), intoxicants, gambling and other idolatrous practices:

O you who believe, do not consume usury, doubled and redoubled.

Be mindful of Allah, so that you may be successful. [The Qur'an 3:130]

O you who believe, intoxicants and gambling, idolatrous practices, and [divining with] arrows are repugnant acts- Satan's doing- shun them so that you may prosper. [The Qur'an 5:90]



With courtesy of prayerbeads.co

10. Remembrance of Allah

Furthermore, another way to attain success is by remembrance of Allah (dhikr) often. Indeed, dhikr is heavy in the scale of good deeds, loved by the Most Merciful and easy for the tongue. Therefore, we are urged:

... and remember Allah much that you may be successful.

[The Qur'an 8:45 and 62:10]

Remembrance of Allah has several aspects such as; praying (*solah*), do'a, reciting The Qur'an, contemplating on its meaning, remembering Allah's beautiful Names and Attributes, repeating praising phrases (*subhanallah*, *alhamdulillah* etc) and more.

Remembrance of Allah leads to success because it puts our hearts at ease:

Those who have faith and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of God—truly it is in the remembrance of God that hearts find peace. [The Qur'an 13:28]

And it purifies the soul. The Almighty says;
"Truly he succeeds that purifies it."
 [The Qur'an 91:9]

Wealth, power or fame are to no avail in the Hereafter; genuine success, -reaching Paradise- is for those who purify their heart and soul. Embracing good manners, improving our behaviour and controlling our words and deeds will be also helpful to achieve this purification.

And according to the Creator of the universe, successful people have great internal traits:

INNER GROWTH

11. Gratitude and contentment

Another cause of attaining success is to showing gratitude to Allah, The Loving Bestower (*al-Wahhaab*) for His innumerable favours:

Remember Allah's blessings, so that hopefully you will be successful.
 [The Qur'an 7:69]

We have so much to be grateful for, if we only look at the astonishing nature of our body and the fine-tuned creation around us, which we tend to take for granted. There are so much blessings Allah (s.w.t.) has bestowed upon us, whether we

realise it or not, however we will never able to calculate them, Allah mentions:

... If you tried to count Allah's favours you could never calculate them: man is truly unjust and ungrateful. [The Qur'an 14:34]

Additionally, Allah (s.w.t) promises us to give us more, if we thank Him, He can let us achieve all our aspirations in this worldly life and ultimately, succeed in gaining a place in our final home in Paradise

...if you give thanks, I will give you more...
 [The Qur'an 14:7]

Related to that Rasulullah (s.a.w.) mentioned the importance of contentment in regard to being successful:

Successful is the one who enters the fold of Islam and is provided with sustenance which is sufficient for his day's needs, and Allah makes him content with what He has bestowed upon him. [Muslim]

12. Staying away from tyranny, crime, lying and conning others

In the pursuit of wealth, respect, or fame, some may try vile shortcuts by means of oppression, crime, or lying and deceiving others. And maybe in the short run, it seems that they are successful in achieving those goals, but the Qur'an makes it very clear that those who take this approach will never succeed eventually.



What's an effective way to overcome SADNESS? Count your BLESSINGS: Literally!

Who is more in the wrong than someone who invents a lie about Allah or reject His signs? It is a fact that criminals will not succeed. [The Qur'an 10:17]

Musa (Moses) said; Do you say (this) about the truth when it has come to you? Is it magic? And the magicians are not successful. [The Qur'an 10:77]

It matters most, that we strive for the ultimate permanent success, which is in the Hereafter, because that Afterlife is eternal, while this worldly life is very temporarily. Therefore, if a person on top of being a successful scholar or business man, also invests in the success of Akhirah, then s/he is truly doing great, because successful in both worlds is the best!

ACTION POINTS

I would like to conclude with some practical points to act upon towards success in this life and the next.

- Research the *ayāt* in the Qur'an in which Allah speaks about success. For example, at the website "Qur'an Index" you can search easily for the word "success" and see a list with the ayat containing it: <https://www.Qur'anindex.net/kelime.php?id=8762>
- Try to find a way to inculcate these *ayat* in your day-to-day life.
- Keep a journal to write down your strengths and weaknesses, so it becomes clear to you what to work on.
- Implement a routine to follow each characteristic of successful people; one trait at a time

You will soon notice a change in your worldview regarding life; it becomes easier to deal with worldly challenges, easier to be grateful and happy, your worldly affairs are being taken care of, and your heart will be more at ease and it will make you yearn more for Paradise. You become more conscious of Allah, and examine carefully if your actions are pleasing or displeasing to Allah. Then you realize that this beautiful state of Ihsan is actually the definition of true success in Islam.

Some doa's to achieve success

Doa 1

Others pray; Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protects us from the torment of the Fire!

[The Qur'an 2:201]

Ibn Al-Kathir mentions that the word "good" in this ayah includes all good aspects of this life and seeks refuge from all types of evil. The good of this life concerns every material request of well-being, spacious home, pleasing companions, sufficient provision, beneficial knowledge, good job or deeds and comfortable means of transportation. As for the good of the Hereafter, the best of this includes acquiring Paradise, which also means acquiring safety from the extreme horror at the Gathering Place on the Day of Judgement and being questioned lightly. As for obtaining safety from the Fire, it includes being directed to what leads to a good end in this world, such as avoiding the prohibitions, sins of all kinds and doubtful matters.

Doa 2

Rasulullah (s.a.w.) said:

"O Allaah, nothing is easy but that which You make easy and You can make hardship easy if You will." [Ibn Hibbaan]

If a person utters these dua's (asking that his spiritual and worldly affairs may be set right or corrected with proper presence of mind and sincerity of intention) and strives to achieve this, Allah will grant him what he has prayed for, hoped for and striven for, and He will turn his worry into joy and happiness. (<https://islamqa.info/en/69759>)

Doa 3

Doa of Rasulallah (s.a.w.):

O Allah, I ask You for beneficial knowledge, goodly provision and acceptable deeds. [Ibn Majah]

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Conclusion

Hayya 'alal-Falāḥ in the call for prayer calls us to strive to become successful. It thus means: hasten to all that which is good for us and that which may bring us true happiness in this world and the Hereafter. *Falāḥ* means success in this worldly life and attaining of an eternal home in Paradise in the Hereafter, something which can be achieved in many ways as prescribed above.

Islam put a different criteria on excellence than only intellectual excellence and that is spiritual excellence. This is open to the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich. A sweeper could be better than a Ph.D. professor, in the sense of better character, more moral integrity, better father, better civic member of society. The real judge in Islam is judge of character. That is what Muslims have to offer to society.

Success in the Hereafter is fully determined by this life. So by extension, only when you are successful in this life, in the way our Maker describes success, can you be successful in

the Hereafter. Indeed, the worst “success” is when people only strive and struggle for worldly success, while losing *Aakhirah* success.

But man exceeds all bounds, when he thinks he is self-sufficient.

[The Qur'an 96:6-7]

While people around us are seeking fame, recognition, wealth and indulging in the attraction and entertainment of this world, a true believer has a much higher and wider aim: to seek success from The One who can give her/him the best in both worlds. Therefore, a wise Muslim would plead to Allah for the best of everything in *Dunya* and *Aakhirah* (as mentioned above ayah 2:201).

While we all know this world is very temporary in nature—as opposed to the eternity of *Aakhirah*—we sometimes tend to lose our focus and forgot our destination, because this world is made so alluring and tempting. And although we all yearn for Paradise, working for it often gets side-tracked. May this humble attempt help us to change for the better to reach the ultimate success; *Jannah!* AMEEN!

Usth. Khadijah Monica

(BA Qur'an & Sunnah Studies, IIUM)

Volunteer at International Da'wah Institute
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<https://Qur'anacademy.io/blog/success-in-islam/>
www.islamreligion.com/

<http://muslimsuccess.com/define-success/#>

<https://www.awqaf.gov.ae/en/Pages/FridaySermonDetail.aspx?did=6785>



Successful daa'i



By Abdul Malik Bulemi

Born to a Christian family in Ghana (West-Africa), Muhammad Michael -also known as Muhammad Ghana- has reverted more than 30 years ago to Islam. He has stood against all odds and challenges that life offered him to becoming a successful influential Muslim as he is today.

Muhammad Ghana is a successful striving daa'i (propagator) who has strongly established the International Islamic Da'wah Centre (IIDC) in Kelantan Kota Bharu. He is also a happily married man and a proud father of two children residing in Dubai and Japan.

Because of Muhammad's enthusiasm and commitment to da'wah activities, he has over the years contributed in guiding more than 500 hundred people both local (Malaysians) and international (foreigners) to embrace Islam. He has furthermore reached out to Christians (the majority) in his hometown Ghana to invite them to Islam, receiving positive responses. He has contributed and established a masjid in his hometown for the newly converts to pray and to study Islam there. A deed that will make him own a house in Paradise, by the will of Allah, ameen, as Rasulullah (s.a.w.) said:

Whoever builds a mosque for Allah, Allah will build for him a house like it in Paradise. [al-Bukhari]

His hard work has seen him earn certificates and recognition from the religious department of Kelantan and various awards from the state mosque and from the Kelantan king himself.

Muhammad's journey began back in the days when he was in search of true happiness. He sailed across seas and oceans thinking and



contemplating about his life he was deeply concerned about the power and greatness of God whenever the winds and the tides blow on the ship. He recalls one time when he almost sank in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean during a heavy storm, lucky enough all crew survived but they had lost 15 containers of cargo which fell into the ocean.

Over the years Muhammad through his journey of seeking true happiness he met a friend who advised him to move to Thailand if he truly wanted to be happy. He took the advice and relocated to Thailand. Upon reaching Thailand in Bangkok he found himself into a "heaven" of enjoyment partying and celebrations everywhere. Despite all the worldly pleasures in Bangkok Muhammad could still not find true peace and happiness he always felt something was missing.

After giving deep thoughts, he later resorted to trying once more and decided to fell in love to a Thai Buddhist lady, whom they later on got married. These made him to be a Christian and a practicing Buddhist man at the same time.

Recalling one time when the wife used to take him to the Buddhist temple for worship and on Sundays he would take her to church.

As he stood up every morning before the Buddha statue in their house Muhammad still could not believe in any of the ritual being done and practiced. His heart was still longing for true happiness and contentment.

After few weeks into Buddhism Muhammad met one of his brothers from Ghana on a Malaysian ship. He shared his experience and journey with him expressing his frustration and disappointment about his life, he felt like wanting to commit suicide for he still was in pain despite having a foreign wife and a new religion.



Feeling his pain, the brother advised Muhammad to be a Muslim. He hesitated and showed fear but the brother managed to convince him that true happiness lies in being a Muslim. Thinking out loud Muhammad thought Islam to be a very difficult religion to practice having lots of restrictions and rules to follow. Islam to him meant imprisonment of life in this world something that he was not ready to be a part of.

Giving a thought to his brothers advice days passed by and he met new friend this time from America, they kept each other's company most of the time until one day as they were walking within the streets of Bangkok they passed by the Middle Eastern shops and one Arab shopkeeper



greeted them "Assalam alaikum". The American friend responded to the greeting, which left Muhammad shocked and surprised that his friend was a Muslim. He kept silent for some time, until the American noticed that he has been quiet for a long time, he then asked him what the problem was. Muhammad reluctantly answering by asking if he were truly a Muslim what does it take for him to become a Muslim like him? Thinking that he will be required to travel to the Middle East; Saudi Arabia or Egypt in order to become a Muslim.

The friend smiled and hugged him tightly, he then advised him that to be a Muslim he did not need to go to any Arab country, but instead he can revert to Islam anywhere any time. Muhammad was left shocked, the friend later gave him some money and ordered a taxi for him to take him to masjid Harun in Bangkok where he will be guided on how to become a Muslim.

At masjid Harun Muhammad met a group of *da'wah* travellers (*Tabligh*) from Malaysia. They listened keenly to Muhammad as he explained his story later, they convinced him declare the testimony of faith (*Shahadah*). They joyfully welcomed him to Islam hugging and presenting gifts in the form of money to him. For the first time, he really felt a sense of brotherhood love, true happiness and contentment of the heart.

Getting back home he shared the good news to his wife. It took her by surprise. Furious and agitated she demanded for a divorce because

she could not live with a Muslim man. Muhammad watched her for days in frustration *“but as they say love conquers all”* he managed to calm her down and convinced her to follow him to masjid Harun where she also embraced Islam.

The *‘ijtimak’* (Da’wah Tabligh Travellers) advised Muhammad and his wife to migrate to Kelantan north of Malaysia bordering Thailand, in order for them to learn and practice Islam. They took the advice and they relocated. Upon arrival they settled down in Kota Bharu and enrolled with Muslim Welfare Organization (PERKIM) to learn and study how to practice Islam. A journey that has seen both of them successful and prosperous in giving back to the society.

Muhammad currently runs his *da’wah* center (IIDAC - International Islamic Information &

Da’wah Centre) in Kota Bharu and his wife is a professional chef with a culinary center, teaching and sharing knowledge to newly converted Muslim women on how to set up a food business with variety of delicious kinds of food and different cuisines.

They are a living testimony that with Islam comes happiness, success and prosperity that is achieved through patience and hard work. [The Qur’an 94:5-6]

Abdul Malik Bulemi

Convert (2017) from Kenya

Diploma in Mass Communication

BA Education, Studying Islam in IDIP Kelantan





Overcoming SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

By *Magdalena Abdullah*

Once upon a time I wanted to kill myself. This is my story.

I was born a normal baby in Malaysia. My father adored me as most dads do. I grew up being loved well by both my parents. As a child I never felt unloved. But as the teenage hormones set in, I began to feel different. It all started with this peculiar affinity towards thinking about Life's Big Questions. I pondered about God. Who was He and what did He look like? Innocent childish questions, but it had very heavy philosophical undertones. I started to notice my obsession with my thoughts and how it affected my thinking pattern. I became focused with an idea until it really affected and upset me.

Soon, I noticed, I felt different. I felt I had no control over my happy moods nor my sad moods. In about my mid-teens I was anxious, worried, obsessive and a nervous wreck. Mentally I was always thinking almost to the brink of being obsessive and compulsive. It was a never-ending vicious cycle. It affected my behaviour. I was becoming a burden and a nuisance to the society, my loved ones and friends.

My first nervous break-down happened when I was 16. I was about to sit for my major exams. I suffered my first major psychosis after months of sleep deprivation, worry and anxiety.

As a result of this incident I was hospitalised. The shame. The embarrassment. The absolute sadness. Fast forward 2 years later, after being misdiagnosed with schizophrenia, my new shrink told me I was Bipolar. I cried.

Bipolar is a type of illness categorized under "mental illnesses". It affects the brain chemistry. It is a malfunction of the serotone re-uptake inhibitor. Another way of saying, you can't control your sadness nor your happy emotions. It goes terribly out of control. People with Bipolar will exhibit suicidal tendencies during deep depression and severe hyper-activity and over productiveness during manic states. The patients normally are very creative and highly intelligent but are terribly annoying people during their destructive phases. They go on spending sprees, behave gregariously and can be downright obnoxious and super over-confident about themselves without really wanting to. During meltdowns they

could be potentially dangerous to themselves and others.

This meant that I was a walking time-bomb. I went through years of torture through my youth coping with this illness. Oversleeping, going late to classes or work, waking up late, suffering from severe insomnia and suffering from various attempts on my life. People labelled me problematic. One day, I decided to walk the plank and I swallowed a lot of prescription pills. I recalled after that I was unconscious. Slipping into a state of unawareness. I slept for 3 days. I woke up but I felt hazy, numb and was on the hospital bed. I was surprised.



There was an invisible force – protecting me against my will. It was God. Allah. I believe that it was because of my Belief in Allah, that He was my God that saved me my life. Because of this Allah (s.w.t.) did not will it for me to die that day.

You would be asking, how is it possible a Muslim can do this act, whereas it is clearly wrong according to the Islamic teachings?

How can a Muslim contemplate such a heinous attempt to take the sanctity of one's own life against the Creator's commandments? The question is not "how" but rather it is due to God's plan and fate.

Over time I began to comprehend that it was an ultimate test for me. The "test", pulled me closer to God. It made me to eventually become a better *Muslimah*. An emphatic human-being who wants to contribute to society.

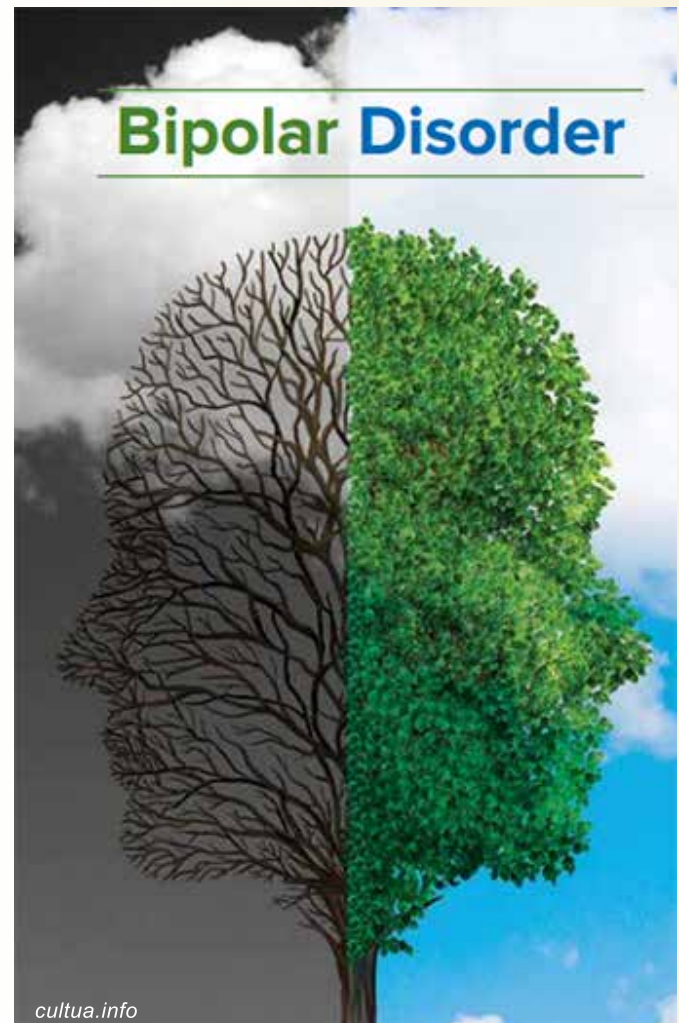
I would like to share my tips on how to survive this ordeal. Essentially if you are Bipolar, for you to survive this trial, I list down 5 elementary to do's that you must incorporate into your life.

1) If I had one key advice to anyone out there with Bipolar and is struggling to survive, I would tell them to be diligent with taking their prescribed medication. Nowadays the medications are becoming cheaper and the generic duplicates can be bought at lower rates. So never skimp on the medication.

As a Muslim, we are obligated to seek medication to heal ourselves from illnesses. Let me quote a saying of our beloved Prophet (s.a.w.):

Every disease has a cure. If a cure is applied to the disease, it is relieved by the permission of Allah Almighty.

[Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

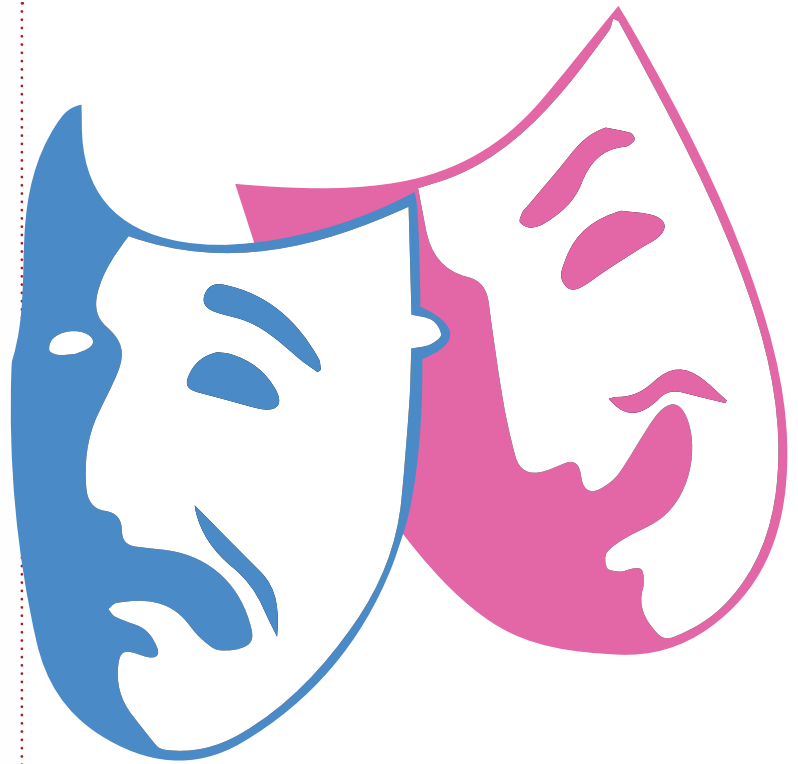


My parents believed in conventional medicine and sent me to a psychiatrist as early as possible as they could. This open and also vital step to healing was against society's taboo approach on mental illnesses. It is in fact at hind-sight an instrumental step towards my healing. It took much discipline and acceptance and my part to take medications on a strict daily basis. I had to overcome much jihad (struggle). The new generation medications helped make me function normally, so much that no one detected my traits anymore. If you can't afford the new generation medications, try to apply for an O.K.U. card (special privilege-card for physically / mentally challenged people). There are provisions for us as it is categorised under a disability.

2) Reading motivational books helped tremendously. Reading books on the stories of the Prophet (s.a.w.) inspired me to reflect and be grateful for my state. I tell myself it could have been worse. This facilitates the process of healing as it helps seal the wounds and grief it caused to my heart.

3) Being accepting (a concept known as "redha" in Islam) with the condition that was granted by God, helped me come to terms with the illness and obtain absolute closure.

4) Employing a lot of zikir/wirid (a type of remembrance of Allah) helped stabilize the



anxiety and stress. As zikir is known to focus and realign our thoughts away from stress and helps calm the nervous system.

5) The power of positive mind-set. The main root of the problem is due to a chemistry imbalance in the brain. However, the imbalance is aggravated by having a negative mind-set. I used to have a very negative, all-or-nothing and rigid approach to problem solving. This negative cognition needs to be reset. I read books on positive thinking and adopted a more relaxed approach to thinking which helps tremendously.

But all this will not help unless you come to terms with the fact that Bipolar is a way for Allah to purify you. To cleanse your heart from all the misdeeds and sins that covers our hearts as a result of the distress and sins the trial caused you. No one is perfect and free from misdeeds. With this view in mind, you will succeed in becoming a better human being on earth and hopefully Allah will accept your jihad (inner struggle).

Magdalena Abdullah

Muslim Activist & Daa'i

Remember *Allah* often
so that you may be
SUCCESSFULL



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The Bionic Woman



By Hager Mostafa

During my early childhood, I was watching an old American TV serie “The Bionic Woman”. I do not remember the plot or the story. I only remember this woman who has non-human parts in her body that makes her strong and allows her to help others. After many years, the film became less and less important to me, it became just a "science fiction" film.

Last year, I met two Muslim converts (who reverted to Islam recently). They redefined “The Bionic Woman” phrase for me. And I would like to share their stories. The first one, Shera, is the youngest. I met her after she reverted to Islam for only 2 months. Now she completed a whole year being a Muslim.

Successfully changing our lifestyle

Once Shera asked me if she really must use her right hand to eat as a Muslim. I got confused although I knew the answer, but it wasn't easy for me to explain it to her. I thought she might find it very difficult and this might push her away from the faith. I searched for more information and asked around. All the fatwas (Islamic rulings) confirmed that she “should” use her right hand, while eating. At this moment I didn't have a choice. I told her, “yes, you should”. She said it might not be that easy for her. But she started to commit herself to new habit like using her right hand for wudu’, and like waking up for Fajr and night prays. I can do it, I just need time, she said.

After a while, she did it. I was a little confused and asked myself, how can humans change in such a drastic way in such short time. “Is this for everyone?” I asked myself.

A lot of studies focus on our abilities to change through gaining new habits. Some of them assumed that if you did the same thing for 40 days, it will turn to be a habit of life. Other studies introduced several factors that affect the time needed for a new habit to be acquired, like the importance of that habit to the person, personality, culture, environment and our previous experiences. **However, all theories agree that a strong and persistent will is the key to success.** And if you stick to that willingness, change becomes just a matter of time.

And while this is applicable on almost all of us, the degree of adaptation and the number of habits we can change are dependent on our willingness. In this moment, I realized that my friend who succeeded in adapting the new habit of eating with her right hand, do so because of her strong will and determination. And that's how she succeeded in a short time to adapt this habit along with other major changes in her lifestyle in just few months.



Shera

Shera spent a lot of time training herself to learn how to fast. On her first day of fasting, she told me that she was tired. She resisted her tiredness and disappointed emotions. She read about strategies that helped her to keep fasting, while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Then she succeeded to fast last Ramadan entirely, without health issues or negative emotions. At the end of the month, she was very happy while fasting. And she realized how fasting changed her personality and helped her to discover a new kind of strength inside herself. "I need to thank Allah for this also", she said.

Success in adaptation to a new way of life

Adapting to a new religion is not just doing some kind of religious performances inside a prayer room. It is a new way of life and new worldview. New Muslims need to get used to and adapt with this.

In 2004, Earley & Mosakowski assured in their study about adaptations with non-familiar environment. They stated that people who want to adapt to a new environment, will need at the first stage to be educated about it, in order to get to know it better.

New converts should become familiar with the Islamic way in dealing with every situation and action. Then they have to manage their emotions and behaviours accordingly. Researchers assume that no one can adapt without emotional intelligence.

For several months, I talked with my friend every day about a new topic. We have shared a lot of stories and events of life. Sometimes we laughed together, other times we cried. In one day, she surprised me and said "**I feel lonely**". I asked her "why you feel like that, despite all the Muslims that surround you?" "I'm not like them", she said. "I feel a psychological distance between me and them."

In that moment I remembered the day when I went through a plastic surgery, after an accident I had in the past that changed my physical appearance. The surgery brought my appearance back to normal, but instead of feeling happy when I looked to that part of my body, I cried deeply.

Later, my doctor said that this was a normal reaction, as all of us keep an image of ourselves inside our brains. When our bodies change, we need time to redefine our new self-image.

I spoke to my friend again and told her that the same happened to her when she changed her religion. You did have your own lifestyle, character, thoughts and habits, I added. But now you try to reach another model. Even if you believed in the new model, you still need time and effort to adapt to the new life you chose for yourself. You are in a bridge between your non-Muslim and Muslim character, which makes you unique. You are not quite the same as your 'old self', and yet you are not like other Muslims, that were raised as a Muslim since birth. And your mind is reshaping your new lifestyle, character, thoughts and habits. And you do your best to adapt, even if your mind strategy is not that clear yet about those changes.

Your adaptation started when you decided to be a part of the Muslim community, while you are doing your best to understand this new culture and what is the role model behavior in different situations. And after 6 months only since the start of that journey, I think you have become very close to the good Muslim image that you aimed for with a clear grasp of knowledge about Islamic culture and habits.

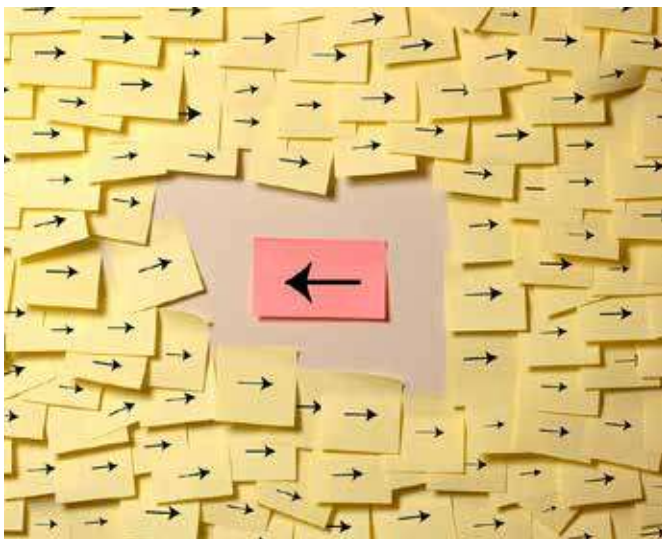
In the famous book of Goleman, "Emotional intelligence", which was the most sold book in 1995, is explained what is happening to you.



You started to achieve the first level of emotional intelligence by understanding and managing your emotions, whether positive or negative. He said, if you want to manage any relation with others, start by managing your own emotions.

Do you remember when you decided to leave your comfort zone and search for the reality in your life? You knew at that moment, that you would have to face your family and community with this decision.

In general, in order to go through a change outside your comfort zone, you need a strategy. You must reshape and create inner emotions to help yourself to overcome this stage. And those who have higher levels of emotional intelligence, can do it. As they try to find and create a lot of motivations in their lives to give them a boost of



strength to start and continue. A lot of people start with a change, but fail to continue. Only those who has high levels of emotional intelligence can really go through the whole process till the end.

I reassured her that she was brave enough to announce her 'new self' to her family, friends and community. A lot of people didn't change a thing in their lives out of fear of others. But when you decide to make an unfamiliar behavior or when you embrace a new belief, the community might refuse that change. And then, you need to create your own inner reasons and motivations to help yourself to overcome this refusal. Almost every change is faced with refusal and pressure to stand still. But not all of us can endure that pressure



and fight against what is familiar and common. In regard to this I always recall this quote:

"The greatest battles of life are fought out every day in the silent chambers of one's own soul." [David O. McKay]

Last August, my friend celebrated her first anniversary since she became a Muslim. She was patient enough to work hard on her adaptation to the new lifestyle, character, thoughts and habits. Her journey was very inspiring. Her story embodied the modern meaning of Hijra. I like to call it the Jihad of adaptation, which is the hardest step in the journey as it requires a high level of emotional intelligence to face and overcome the negative inner emotions as well as the probable refusal of the community.

The success of continuous improvement

The other story is about Hajjah Rukiye Abdul Mutakallim, or as I call her Mum Rukiye. She is an elderly woman who reverted to Islam, when she was 18 years old. No one in her family was Muslim. Today she has a very big Muslim family, and her mother too reverted to Islam, before she died.

The first time I met Hajja Rukiye was in an Islamic event in Egypt, where she stayed to study the Arabic language. I arrived at the event place and found her praying Isha. After she finished, one of our friends introduced us to each other. We started chatting and meanwhile she asked me to open The Qur'an



on the last ayah of surah *al-Imran*, which I then recited.

O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that you may prosper.

[The Qur'an 3:200]

She explained the meaning of this ayah and said, "that's what Allah needs from us in that world". My daughter, she added, be patient for everything in your life to gain fruits of life. Later, we started reciting The Qur'an together each week. I can't forget her tears, when she completed reading one page in Arabic without mistakes and with very good Arabic pronunciation. She was 64 when she did that. She didn't stop learning despite her age. She paid a lot of money to master new languages. She said, I don't care to get a certificate; I care for the skills that help me to improve my life and the life of others to reach *al-Jannah* (Paradise). She repeated that ayah from surah *al-Imran*. She said, as I told you before that's what Allah asks from us to do in our life.

The success of building a community

Mum Rukiye was not an ordinary person. She forgave the murderer of her son who served in the US army. He was shot on the street in 2014, by a teenager who was just 14 years old at the time. In the court, she asked the judge for a permission to speak few words to the murderer. She spoke very impressive and unexpected words to the boy who killed her son. She said "I'm not angry with you, I forgive you. **Revenge is not our way**".

When I heard these words, I realized how different she was. I looked up to her in admiration. I asked her, why would you forgive him? He didn't make a small mistake; he killed your beloved son. She replied with words of wisdom, "Revenge wouldn't bring my son back. I want to prevent murders by improving the murderer's life and the lives of others like him. I forgive him"



Rukiye Abdul Mutakallim forgave her son's murderer in court

Now, she is very known for her role in fighting violence and supporting the rights of education and decent life to the marginalized communities. She said to me that she has to work on bringing up a new generation that serves the humanity for the better. A Muslim should care for her/his community and the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

These stories are based on true events not just some science fiction drama. The bionic woman in the TV series doesn't look very appealing to me now, as she has abnormal parts. The real bionic women are those, who dare to change their lives and the lives of people around, despite the age, culture or the environment. And to be fair, our world is full of noble and great stories.

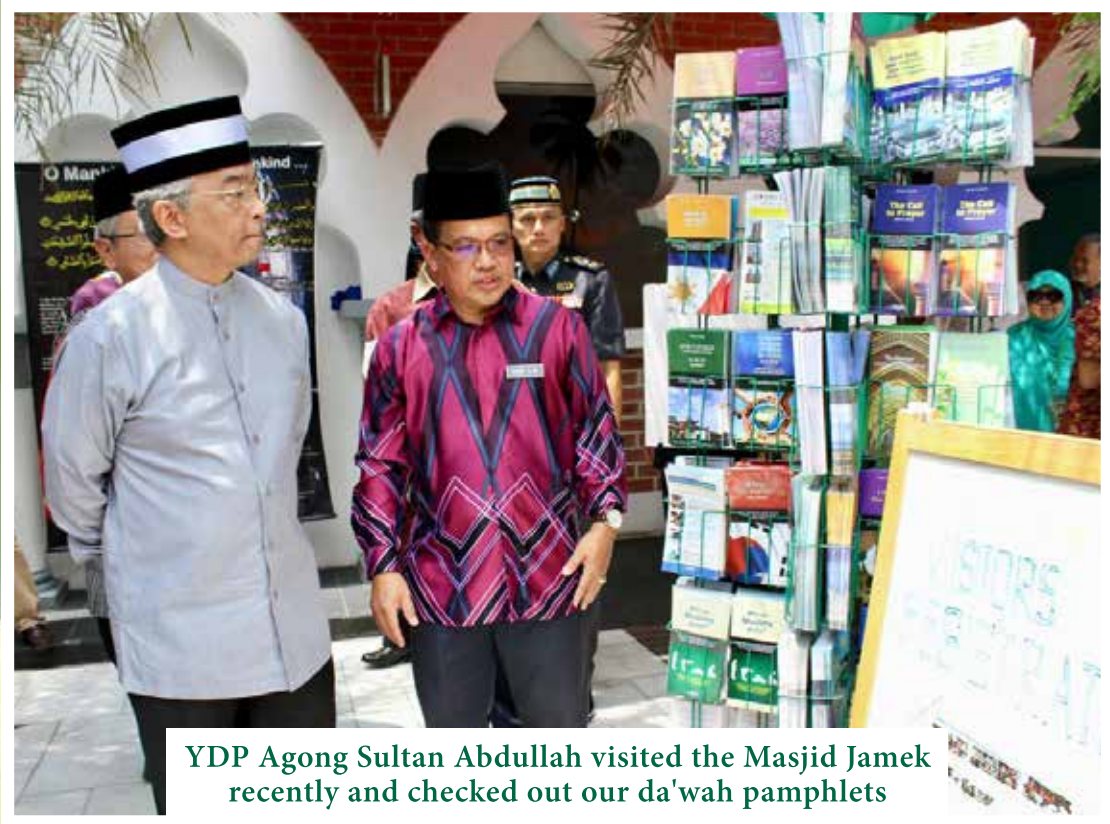
And these stories of converted Muslims are among these great stories because it includes a lot of inspiring successes and powers, like the success of adapting to a new way of life, the success of continuous improvement and the strength of building a community. And I hope everyone finds a way to embrace such great strengths through such great characters, as they might change our minds and thoughts on life.

Dr. Hager Mostafa

Ph.D in business administration

Researcher in cross-culture and HR fields

She is originally from Egypt.



YDP Agong Sultan Abdullah visited the Masjid Jamek recently and checked out our da'wah pamphlets



A visit to the Holy Rosary Church in Brickfields



A one week Young Imam Course in Mandarin



Multiracial *Muhibbah* gathering with PERKIM leadership at IDIP-KL



Da'wah Cadre Workshop - visit to Masjid Wilayah



Da'wah Cadre Workshop IDIP-KL

Workshop in full swing



The speakers in the Da'wah Cadre Workshop



PERKIM pamphlets on display in Masjid Negara



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Becoming Healthy Successfully



An accountant, who balanced food intake with exercise and lost 28kg while profiting health

By Dr Mazlyn Mustapha

Her name is Suraya. She is happily married and is blessed with a three year old son. An accountant by training, she successfully runs her own accounting firm in Kajang, Selangor. The accounting firm assists those who need help with their accounts and taxes.

Suraya was born in Kuala Lumpur to parents; the late Mr Ali bin Yunus, and mother, Dr Zainon binti Ghazaley. She has a younger brother, Mr Shafiq Ali, who is a pilot. Suraya attended the MARA Junior Science College in Taiping, Perak and continued to pursue accountancy and A.C.C.A. in a joint venture program between Kolej Yayasan Pelajaran MARA and Dublin Business School, in Ireland.

She had always loved mathematics and numbers while in school. Her grandfather was a clerical auditor at Jabatan Audit Negara and her uncle was an accountant in a government linked company (GLC). Both inspired her to choose accounting as a career. While pursuing her Professional Accountancy studies, she had already planned to one day own an accounting firm after gaining work experience in the area.

After graduating, Suraya started her first position as an audit assistant with Mustapha, Khoo & Co. Life as an auditor was very demanding, with long working hours almost every day. She was however, happy with the arrangement and saw it as an opportunity to gain more knowledge and experience in order to one day open her own accounting firm. At that time, she had already selected her future business partners.

After two years her next position was with Tricubes, a company in the midst of being listed in the Bursa Malaysia. Suraya grabbed the opportunity to elevate her knowledge and experience in

corporate finance as well as corporate and financial planning. During the listing exercise, the workload was very demanding again involving long hours. Finally, Tricubes was listed and Suraya worked until she was promoted as the Group Head of Finance.

Looking back to her life at this particular time, working long hours and chasing after her dreams was a priority. Suraya admits not having a healthy lifestyle, eating a lot and not exercising. At 27 years of age, her weight was 85kg. She was diagnosed with hypertension and her doctor prescribed medication to control the high blood pressure.

At 30 years of age, Suraya married and had difficulty conceiving due to obesity and stress. Four years later, she started her own accounting firm, Xcel Solutions Sdn Bhd, with carefully selected partners. The company focuses on helping small and medium sized companies, providing a one stop centre for accounts and secretarial services and associated with Henry Tee & Co and MDZ & Co for audit and tax services.



Alhamdulillah, the business grew. The strategy to provide personalised services has proven to be successful. The clients tend to be small in size and could not afford expensive consultancy fees, thus, are given free consultancy and allowed to ask questions at any time. She realised that small sized businesses often struggle with documentations and banking, and this distracts the owner from focusing fully on the business, thus she created the new outsourcing accounting service IKIRA4U, which is equivalent to having one full time accounting staff. In the future, the company is planning to provide financial planning services to clients as well.

When the business started to grow there was less stress, and Suraya conceived spontaneously after 7 years. The pregnancy was not easy however, due to hypertension. Oligohydramnios was detected at 20 weeks pregnancy and her baby had I.U.G.R. (intra-uterine growth restriction), the baby was not able to grow normally in the womb. Doctors gave the baby a 50-50 chance of survival and Suraya prayed a lot during those trying times. She remained positive and depended totally on Allah the All Mighty. Her baby was born premature at 33 weeks of life and thankfully did not have any serious medical problems.

THE WEIGHT LOSS JOURNEY

Suraya had tried to lose weight many times. Her New Year's Resolution to lose weight was a recurring theme for more than a decade. Somehow, she managed not to achieve her goals. She tried using meal plans, personal trainers, and weight loss apps. It was difficult and not practical due to her busy lifestyle and lack of time to cook and prepare her own meals. She often felt demotivated because she was doing it alone. There was no guidance on what to eat and her weight continued to increase. At one point she was 95kg.

When Suraya reached 40 years old, she felt something was not right with her body. She had reduced energy levels, her knees hurt, she suffered from allergic rhinitis and often caught the flu. Her body often ached and simple activities like climbing the stairs caused shortness of breath.



THE TURNING POINT

One day, Suraya went to her doctor for a medical check-up. Her cholesterol level was 5.8 and fasting sugar was 6.8. The doctor told her she had pre-diabetes. The doctor added that because of hypertension which Suraya had for the past 14 years, her parents both were diagnosed with diabetes, she herself had diabetes during pregnancy, she was obese and could develop diabetes at any time. If not today, then maybe tomorrow.

What the doctor said shook Suraya to the core. She had just lost her father due to diabetic complications. Her son was three years old, he was still small. She did not want him to have to take care of her if she fell sick while he was still in school. She wanted to see him grow and have his own family.

Before she met the doctor that fateful day, Suraya had signed up for a program called Fitblast X with Tasvengers, because she witnessed how her friend had successfully lost weight and had become a coach. All her previous attempts to lose weight had been done alone, and this was the first time she would be using a group approach. Seeing her friend succeed, she thought there was no harm giving it a try. Plus, she felt that her body did not feel right and that it was time to start exercising.

What the doctor said about her health was a strong motivating factor that helped her focus and give her best. "The best wealth is always health", as cliché as it sounds, Suraya agrees it is true.

THE PROGRAM

The brand name is Tasvengers and is lead by Coach Tas. All fitness programs start with FitBlast and each program is different from the other. The main focus for the program is food, exercise and a healthy lifestyle. There are more than 20 coaches available at present and each coach is designated to certain areas such as KLCC, Bangi, Cheras Selatan and others. Each coach will look for participants to join their program. All participants in each area will join a WhatsApp group created by the coach in their area.

The program begins with a diet chat. It is presented by Coach Tas to all participants. She will share the rules of thumb regarding food intake, such as how to select which foods to eat and how to determine the portions of food. Everyone has to eat five to six times a day to increase metabolic rate and make the body work as a fat burning machine.

The food selection for the program is simple, it encompasses food that is normally consumed by everyone such as fish, chicken, meat, eggs, vegetables, ulam, salad, and vegetable soup, to give some examples. Certain foods are not encouraged such as fried food, gravy and processed food. The concept is to eat clean. For example, if the dish is fish cooked in fat gravy (ikan masak lemak), participants will eat the fish without the gravy. The

food portions are “suku, suku, separuh” or two quarters each of protein and rice with one half portion of vegetables. Other than using “suku, suku, separuh” concept for food portions, the participants hands can also be used as a guide for food portions.



There are no meal plans. Eating out is allowed as long as the rules are adhered to. Calorie counting is not needed, following the guide would lead to an intake of about 1300 calories per day. Each person has to consume adequate macronutrients including protein, carbohydrates, fat and fibre. There are three main meals with snacking in between and the good news for most Malaysians is that rice is allowed. Thus the program is very practical.

The program includes ‘foodskool’, where the participants are taken out and shown how to shop for food at the local supermarket. They are taught how to choose healthy foods, how to read labels, nutrition facts and ingredients. One of the important principle is to avoid too much processed food.

Every time a meal is taken, the participant will have to take a picture and post it in the group. The coach will comment on each meal. This is done five times a day for each participant. If there are ten participants, the coach will have to comment on all fifty meals daily.



Every activity is done in groups. The first session is known as the 'bonding session' as this will boost positive energy. If the participant has eaten something that is not in accordance to the program, the coach will comment first in the group and then discuss personally through private message. If this still does not work, the participant will be referred to Coach Tas.

Everyone who has joined the program has been successful. There has never been a participant who did not lose weight compared to the weight at the beginning of the program. However, the degree of success does depend on how diligent and disciplined the participants are.

At the start of the program, each participant will be given individualised targets to achieve. The objectives are based on calories deficit. The targets are within healthy weight loss range. It must be gradual, and not drastic, weight loss. Apart from that, enough water must be taken during the program, up to three litres per day or until the urine becomes clear, and each participant has to work out twice a week. Participants must ensure adequate sleep too.



Workouts are H.I.I.T. (high intensity interval training) which can continuously burn fat up to 48 hours after. For those who are unable to follow the vigorous workouts, for example elderly participants, a technique called 'regression' is used. Regression refers to the change to low impact type of work outs. If the participant is unable to jump, they can just lift up the right leg followed by the left leg. Participants who are unable to run can instead walk very fast.

There is a 'weighing session' every week and participants will come to know that by not exercising, there will not be the desired weight loss or even any weight loss at all. So far, there are no participants who have not achieved results. Some participants do not post all food pictures or miss some workouts but there has never been a participant who did not comply with the whole program because of the monetary cost involved. Successful participants or those who achieve results, are the ones who always post their food pictures in the group and follow the instructions given by the coach.

Losing weight is more than just looking after one's diet and exercise. Controlling stress levels, getting enough sleep and experiencing happiness are important too.

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

According to Suraya, the secret to her success is inner strength and motivation. Without these, losing weight can be tough. Those who are very determined will be successful in the journey. For Suraya, her compelling reason was her 3 year old son, and she did not want to make life difficult for



him if she fell sick and he had to care for her. Most people fail to lose weight because they do not have a good reason to change their lifestyle.

Her second secret is to pray with sincerity. During the prayer, ask Allah for good health and to cure all illnesses. Ask wholeheartedly that the process be made easy. Whenever she is confronted with food that is unhealthy, she would make a prayer.

Other secrets include always having a positive outlook, visualise and see one self as being healthy and slim. Usually the coach will share pictures of participants before and after the program. She would look at pictures of other participants before and after and tell herself that she wants to be like them and inspire others to do the same.

FAMILY SUPPORT IS VITAL

Suraya was lucky that her husband and family supported her throughout the journey. Whenever she had to go for a workout, her husband would willingly take care of their son. Her husband would also enquire about what she planned to eat, and basically he just went along with her choice of food.

Having a support group and a coach also does wonders and bonding with other group members helps one keep positive and motivated at all times.

Last but not least, it is important to tell the world that one is on a diet. Share everything, share the journey, share what one has learnt, what food should be taken, spread the positive vibes and inspire others. When the information and experience is shared, it creates a positive aura inside the person who is sharing. Suraya uses social media to share, she doesn't mind what other people think or say because she knows why she is doing it.

THE RESULTS

Suraya managed to lose 28kg in 10 months and her BMI which used to be more than 35 is now 24. Visceral fat level has reduced from 24% in September 2018 to 7% in August 2019. Now, Suraya is keen to help others lose weight. She can be reached via: FB Page: Coach Sue, Instagram: surayabintiali, Handphone: 019-5903855.



Ass. Prof. Dr. Mazlyn Mustapha

MB Bch BAO, MRCPI, MBA

That Is How Allah Wants Us To Care



By Dr. Claudia Azizah Seise

A few days ago, I attended my first funeral prayer in a mosque. It was conducted right after the mid-day prayer. The dead person was brought into the mosque in a coffin and placed in front of the imam. It was a strange feeling to know that we stood there to pray over our fellow Muslim sister. Before that she would stand with us to bow down to Allah. Now she was there in the coffin placed in front of us. And I had to remember a slogan I once read: Pray to your Lord, before people pray over you. But there was something else that made me reflect deeply of what our Lord wants from us. He wants us to care for our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters.



We Are One Big Family

Caring for our Muslim brother or sister means that we see them as part of our big Muslim family. And what does it mean when we say that all Muslims are one big family? It means that we love them because they are our family. And we care for them because we are one family. Praying

the funeral prayer over our Muslim sister is part of that care. We show her the last respect. We show her that we care. We show that we counted her as part of our big Muslim family. However, to turn away, to walk away from the two minutes it takes to conduct the funeral prayer would imply that we do not care.

We Should Care about their Difficulties

To be one family also means that we care when our Muslim brother or sister has a problem. We try to help when she has a problem. We make doa for them. We give a helping hand. We help them out financially. One beautiful way to help our Muslim brother or sister is by conducting two special prayer cycles for them called *Solat-ul-Hajat*. This special prayer is conducted if a person has special needs. It is performed to ask Allah for help in a particular matter. And what is really amazing about this ritual prayer is that we can actually conduct it also for other people. With this prayer we can show how much we care about our brother's problems and how much we want to help our sister in Islam. It is an extremely beautiful way that Allah has given us to show that we care about our Muslim family.



Share the Pain

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) said that;

The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever. [al-Bukhari & Muslim]

That means, if one part aches, the rest of the body will feel restless and feel the pain or fever as well. One right of our Muslim brother or sister is that we visit them when they are ill. Nowadays, we often feel afraid to visit our sick friends and family members. We are afraid that the illness might spread. We are a prisoner of the capitalist world that does not allow for long illness. Illness is perceived as a sign of weakness. We feel that we cannot fulfill our responsibilities towards our employer. However, to fulfill the rights of our Muslim brother or sister is extremely important. Allah will ask a person on the Day of Judgement, why he did not visit Allah. The person will then be surprised and will ask: *“Ya Allah, how was I supposed to visit you?”*. Allah will then answer that he should have visited his sick Muslim brother and would have found Allah there. Praise be to our most merciful Lord! By visiting our fellow Muslim who is sick, we will be able to draw closer to Allah. We will make ourselves more beloved to Allah. And we will make our spiritual relationship with Allah stronger.

Make Doa for your Fellow Muslims

Many times we are so caught up in our own life and problems. We make doa to Allah to relieve our problems. We make doa for ourselves. Look, how we are even selfish when it comes to making doa. We forget to make doa for our fellow Muslims. One of the rights of a Muslims is that his fellow Muslim makes doa for him when he sneezes and says *“Alhamdulillah”*. That sounds very easy, but many times we even forget to make this easy doa for our fellow Muslim. Besides this special doa,

we should try to make as many supplications as possible for our Muslim brother or sister. We should never feel that we are deprived because we make doa for other people. Because we are being told that whenever we make doa for our fellow Muslim, the angels will say *“Ameen and the same to you”*. So, no need for being selfish when it comes to doa, right?

Spread Peace

Finally, one of the most easy things but difficult to do is to spread peace by saying *“Salaam”* to our fellow Muslims. Walk through this world with open eyes and an open heart. Smile at your fellow Muslims. It is the way of our beloved Prophet (s.a.w.). Say *“Salaam”* to them. When we give *“Saalam”* to our Muslim brothers and sisters, we actually make doa for them. We ask Allah to bestow upon them eternal peace. Isn't that a beautiful doa? The doa for eternal peace. We should make it as often as possible.

If you can take some useful information, this comes from Allah (s.w.t.) and I thank Him for that. If there is anything unclear, wrong or expressed in an unpolite way, I ask Allah (s.w.t.) for His forgiveness. May He always guide us and make us leave this temporary world as Muslims. In need of your doa is the one writing this short article.



Claudia Azizah Seise

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A Kind Soul

Eliff's Journey

By *Ernie Rizah*



She is watching TV at 1-2 am in the morning. She can't sleep.

She jumps on the trampoline to calm herself down before going to sleep.

She loves to do things Eliff's way! She loves to eat food but only Eliff's kind of food.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) had always been a compassionate and known to be a merciful person towards anybody he met. Those who have interacted with him has been recorded talking about his good mannerism and his kindness.

Every time we as Muslims talk about each other we remember a person by their good deeds to us. For example "Ali, yes I know Ali, he gave me my favourite fruits just yesterday!"

Kindness. We need to remember that good deeds are an extension of our present life. It brings us success in our Afterlife.

Eliff is a very special kind soul. Eliff was diagnosed with Autism. Now at a school-going age, she goes to a school in Bursa, Turkey.

Eliff has a ritual that she needs to follow in order to sleep, eat and everything in her daily life. She needs the repetition and the moving motions to calm her, before she goes to bed. Usually she will jump on the trampoline in her home in Malaysia, but since moving to Bursa, Turkey, she is unable to do so.

Seldom do we as Muslims look into what are the needs of the special need children (or adults), such as Eliff. Why?

Mainly, we tend to look for those who are physically unable in order to help, rather than a person with special needs such as Eliff. Because in eyes, Eliff or any other autistic kids/adults look normal, externally. They are just acting up, throwing tantrums or just being naughty.

When going out in public, if a person with a physical need is in need of help, it is easier for them to get help. With invisible special needs, such as autism, it is looked down upon or are frowned upon and the blame is on the parents!

Alhamdulillah for Eliff, her parents-Mrs Noreen and Mr Kartal-are very compassionate and showed to her siblings and others how to treat Eliff. Eliff in any other sense is just a girl.

"One time, Eliff was playing with her little sister, when her sister had a cut. Eliff quickly spits out some saliva and put it on her sister. Her sister was screaming trying to get away from Eliff. But this is her way of medicating herself. "She feels that if her saliva works for her, it must work for her sister too!" Mrs Noreen said.

So if someone in the house fell had small cuts or bruises Eliff will quickly try to heal the hurt





and injuries. It's an automatic response towards her sibling's needs.

She always backed them if any bad words are thrown to them. She is highly supportive of her siblings! In case someone calls her sibling bad names she will immediately defend them, without hesitation.

Eliff went from non-verbal, not talking, not responding to questions (not even to her own mother's question) to currently a happy and talkative little girl. She loves putting out a "Magic Show" where she showcase her new tricks to her siblings.

Her natural loving and happy person is not scared to share her love with the nature. She loves being outdoors, she plays with insects and animals alike. She is able to connect more with animals.

Eliff improved a lot more now that she has the right type of education, that suits to her needs, her diet change seems to help her go through her therapy as well.

She used to love chicken nuggets and fries. As with any autistic child they love familiarity. Repetition. Her mom Mrs Noreen managed to change her diet to more healthy food choices such as chicken and rice. Eliff is happy to go to school and she seems to mix around and socialising more with her friends and her family.

She can now speak to people in English. She tends to choose English as her language of choice even though her family speaks 3 languages. Malay, Turkish and English.

The LOVE Language knows no boundaries! You can speak any language in the world, but love can be understood in whatever language it comes in.

For Eliff nothing can beat having her mom and dad by her side. She is the happiest girl with her family around. She is having fun with her new school and new environment in Bursa Turkey. But she still miss her trampoline. I was thinking maybe, maybe someone special could help her with this. In sha Allah.

Eliff Kartal is a special kind soul. Islam teaches us to be kind. The Prophet (s.a.w.) was kind and merciful towards people and even animals. Allah 'azza wajall is The Most Kind. We are the slaves to Allah, The Most Kind.



It is about time that we learn more about those with invisible special needs amongst the Muslims. In order for us to be kind to them.

We wish you, Eliff Kartal, all the best in your studies and education, ameen.

Ernie Rizah

Founder of Rizq Solar

President al Taaf Ziadah

Diploma in Psychology (UMCCED-UM)

Abu Huraira reported; The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said: *peace and blessings be upon him, said, You will not enter Paradise until you have faith and you will not have faith until you love each other. Shall I show you something that, if you did, you would love each other? Spread peace between yourselves.* [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]



FROM BELIEF TO DISBELIEF

Many people still consider Europe or the USA as Christian countries, but the reality is that the majority of Europeans and Americans consider themselves atheist or agnostic. This is not something new, but it started already a long time ago. Our youth is hugely affected by all these “new” ideas, which are directly or indirectly bombarded at us through social media, games, songs, TV etc.

To understand how this happened, and how it affects us until today, even in Asia, we need to look into our history. Even though history is something many people dread, to truly understand and answer the question above, we cannot avoid taking a closer look at our history.

By *Yahya Abdullah Lont*



The forgotten events and movements of the past had a huge influence on the ‘the rise of atheism’. One of them is the ‘Explosion of Philosophy’ in Europe since the European revolution (Renaissance), whether it is materialism, modernism, scepticism, humanism, secularism, communism, relativism; all those “-isms”.

Understanding this phenomenon helps us to find proper ways to invite them back to acknowledge, thank and worship their Maker.

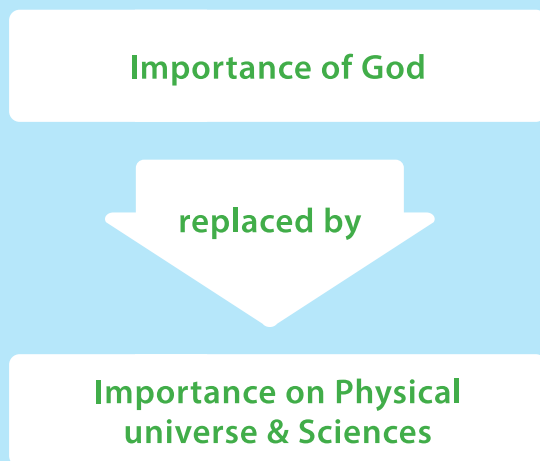
When studying the history you can see 4 common threads among all these philosophies:

1. God was replaced with the physical universe and the sciences.

Philosophers used to have the attitude of: We don't know whether or not God exists. Let's study if God exists.

But that changed after the Renaissance. When scientific discoveries exploded in Europe and the Industrial Revolution came about, the dominating attitude towards God changed: We have been discussing God for centuries and look where it has gotten us. The moment we start exploring the physical universe, for just a little bit, and look where it got us! Look at the machinery we are able to produce, factories we build, the means of transportation we developed etc.

The philosophers debated: whether or not there is a God is not the problem, it doesn't really make a difference. If we instead explored the physical universe and put more attention on it, there will be much more benefit. Let's put God on a side track and focus on what really matters; the study of the physical universe. Seeing its benefits, they study it more, more and more....



During the reign of Christianity, divine revelation was considered to be the Truth, but in the Renaissance traditionalism, religion and revelation began to shrink in its importance. Modernity/Modernism disregarded all revelation and argued that the truth can be found in science and empirical studies. Science became the most important source of truth.

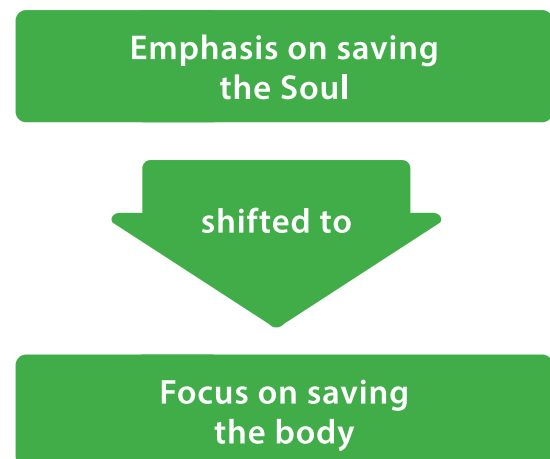
2. Emphasis on the soul got replaced by the body. The body and outward appearances became more important than the soul and inward characteristics.

In pre-modern society there was much more emphasis on the soul than nowadays.

The Church had put much emphasis on saving the soul, to the extent that they were torturing someone to death telling them, they were doing them a favour, because they are saving their soul.

The stance of scientists and philosophers became: we are not sure if there is a soul. As far as we can tell, there isn't one, because it is beyond our senses.

So in Post-Modern society it was said; the study of the soul has not lead anywhere, we don't think we want to save the soul anymore, we rather save the body, let us rather focus on the physical body. You can believe in a soul if you want ("you can have a little prayer room in the university"), but let's us focus more on the physical body. Because the study of the physical body, led to breakthroughs in medicine, diet, improvements in human health, improvement of life expectancy etc. And of course we have seen incredible discoveries, in the realm of physiology, biology, medicine in the last couple of centuries, that the world has never seen before.





3. Hereafter might be or not be there, but what really matters is the physical life here and now.

Philosophers tried to find out, is there an afterlife, heaven and hell?

They reasoned that religion (Christianity) teaches that it is not a problem if one has a miserable life here (on earth) because we are going to have a good life in Heaven. But since they could not be sure, if they would have a good life in Heaven or not, so they rather opted to have a good life in the here and now. So they said: let us study how we can make life here better. Let us study psychology for better emotional life, let's study sociology for better organised society, let's study political science, anthropology, history, urban development, city planning, to improve life, HERE on earth! There might be an afterlife and maybe a heaven and hell, but this life here is more important.

They argued, eventually it doesn't matter if there is an afterlife - the focus was to improve life here and they began to see a better society than before. Improve sanitation systems, infrastructure, city architecture, transportation... all this will make life better HERE. And we saw huge progress.

Salvation in the
Eternal Afterlife

focus
shifted to

Improvement of
Worldly Life



4. Morality used to be absolute in religion (under the Church), morality became subjective post-religion

Religion teaches absolute morals, says what is right and what is wrong. Those morals are timeless and God has revealed them. So this is what must be done and what cannot be done. It was quite a static way of thinking, things did not change much.

Morality used to be absolute in religion, under the Church. But religion itself was so oppressive: How can torturing and killing people be right? That would mean that religion can be mistaken. It's not necessarily right about everything. Maybe some good in them, but we should not have religion decide what is right and what is wrong. (or let the Pope decide what is right/wrong).

The focus became: We can figure out what is right/ wrong ourselves and maybe we will figure out something else

tomorrow, which might be even better than what we have today. The way of thinking became dynamic, full of change.

Morality became subjective post-religion, became relative, and became open to human interpretation. Something which people for centuries considered wrong, we can logically think freely for ourselves about it, liberate our thinking and come with a new conclusion, we can redefine right/wrong.

Homosexuality was considered a psychological disorder by the American Psychological Association unanimously in the 70's, now... if you use the word psychological disorder in the same sentence as homosexuality you are no longer a professor at any reputable university, you are going to lose your 10-year- counselling license, you're gone and done. Things changed very quickly, standards change all the time.

Standard Morality
(by revelation)

shifted to

Relative (subjective)
Morality (by individuals)

As a result of the Renaissance all 4 of these shifts were implemented in the educational system in the post-modern era. This is the education the masses are receiving today, including Muslims in the West and elsewhere, whoever follows -for example- the British system of education. Especially since today we live in a Global Village, we are much more connected to media & information from places where these ideas are dominant.

Focus on the Physical universe: The rationale of today's atheist is that without empirical evidence that God exists, they believe He does not exist. And because of the history described above, many Europeans have such a dislike for religion in general, that they don't even want to talk about it. They do not want to get reminded about God.

When a person from an atheist family becomes Muslim, they are so shocked and upset, without giving the new Muslim a proper chance to discuss the reasons why. Belief in God in general is seen as stupid, backward and illogical.

The Muslim World was not spared of these thoughts of putting more emphasis on the sciences, to the effect that many Muslim parents today place a huge pressure on their children to get a science-based degree while a religious degree is frowned upon.

Focus on the Body: most of the focus is on outward appearances, beauty, fashion, body-image, make-up, diets etc. More so, if people are heavily involved in social media, movies and TV programs every moment of free time they have. The "selfie-revolution" is taking the world by storm, there is so much focus Reflection on the inner self, the soul is hardly existing. In the educational system the (purification of the) soul is not a topic of discussion.

Focus on Worldly Life is most important: YOLO (you only live once) is the motto of today. Since many do not believe in an Afterlife, they need to experience and try everything all in this life. Does not matter if it is unhealthy, you must have tried everything, from bungee jumping to smoking a joint and trying out multiple partners in your life. This also resulted in the focus on the individual: the "me, myself and I"-attitude, which

in turn resulted in less compassion, sympathy and empathy in the feelings and lives of others.

If the Afterlife were to be discussed shallowly in the classroom, it is treated in a more pluralistic way of how each and every religion and philosophy see this topic. However, it is presented as some illogical belief.

Relative morality. It does not seem to end with the changes people try to impose on us. For example, today they speak about gender neutrality. "when a baby is born, we don't ascribe a gender to it, as adults they can decide for themselves what they want to be". They want us to believe we are not born as a girl or a boy, forgetting that we are not only a physical body, but our gender is also related to our soul.

Recently, in a picture story book for toddlers, I read about a duck falling in love with frog. At first I asked myself, why is 'falling in love' already topic discussed for toddlers? But maybe some people might think it is quite innocent, only to realise that both characters (the duck and the frog) in the book are males. This is how subtle they try to push their agenda through every one's throat!



Next year, there might be something else on the agenda, people just follow their self-based desire and make it a human right. This is what happens when people do not want to follow the guideline from their own Maker, Who knows, what is best for them.

The more people are influenced by the Western secular thought, the more they could be tempted

to leave religion. And Muslims are not immune from these influences. Nowadays more and more Muslims are educated in a secular system in which all the above ideas are indoctrinated.



Especially the youth may slowly start to lose their faith, if they are not strong in their iman or lacking sound religious knowledge.

Mr Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan analyses the current situation accurately in his article “Why the West craves materialism and the East sticks to religion”. Even though he describes the situation in Pakistan, it is quite similar in other Muslim countries.

He describes that the polarization of two reactionary groups: “On the one side is the Westernized group that looks upon Islam through Western eyes and has inadequate knowledge about the subject. It reacts strongly to anyone trying to impose Islam in society and wants only a selective part of the religion. On the other extreme is the group that reacts to this Westernized elite and in trying to become a defender of the faith, takes up such intolerant and self-righteous attitudes that are repugnant to the spirit of Islam.”



Khan calls for a “dialogue between the two extremes and for the Westernized group to study Islam properly to arm themselves with knowledge as a weapon to fight extremism and it will make them realize what a progressive religion Islam is.

The Qur'an calls Muslims 'the middle nation', not of extremes. Moreover, we are told to respect other religions, their places of worship and their prophets. At the moment, the worst advertisements for Islam are the countries with their selective Islam, especially where religion is used to deprive people of their rights. In fact, a society that obeys fundamentals of Islam has to be a liberal one.”

Islam is a universal religion and that is why our Prophet (peace be upon him) was called a Mercy for **all** mankind.

May Allah grant the world peace, may Allah keep on giving us guidance and keep our heart firm on the Siratal Mustaqeem. Ameen.

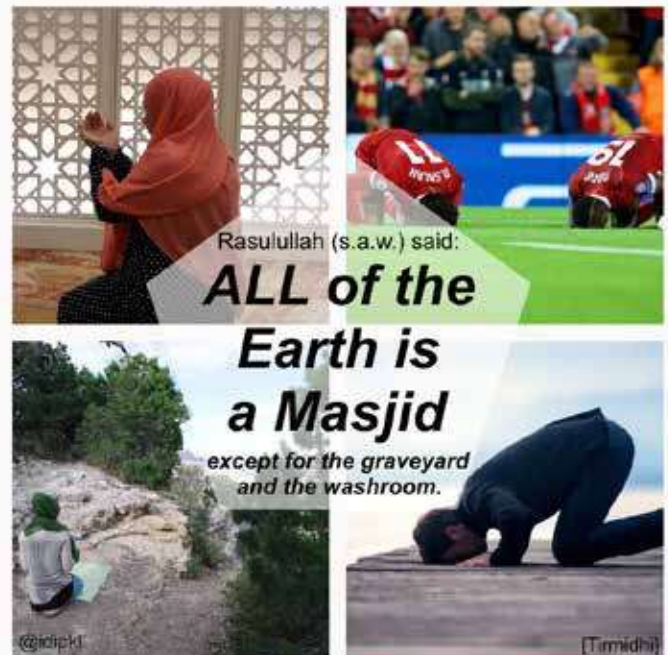
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KSCW: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, CHARACTER AND WISDOM



By Suffian A. Samsuddin

Do schools know what they are doing? Do parents know what schools should be doing? The very idea of education is highly polarized among providers, considering the different philosophical mantra chanted by various schools. The Malaysian education ecosystem is a significant concern. A universal formula can lead us towards a common conclusion on what education is all about, and where do we go from there.



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There are presently many schools in this country. In the past two to three years, I have been observing how schools market themselves. Well, not just schools, but also both public and private universities. These days, the promotion of educational institutions is unusual and unnatural.

Education is not about profit, business and brand. It is not about ideology, dogma, doctrine or propaganda - it is too sacred, noble and pure for such pollutants. Education should not be limited to marketing posters with hippy and

'yippee' tagline, nor about unrealistic ideals typed in brochures. Education is not marketing or branding videos institution brandish in their quest to rake up profit. We must preserve its sanctity. If not all these, what is an education, then? What are its components?

Education is all about KSCW, and these are the ingredients. KSCW should be (1) schools' purpose, (2) the DNA of teachers, (3) teachers' recruitment policy, (4) the questions parents should be asking, and more importantly (5) teaching and learning outcomes – the students. Forget about what you think you know regarding education; let us look at each ingredient and observe how they relate to every stakeholder in education:

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is information taught. All schools do this, but not all school promotes a healthy thinking culture, where it best performs. Knowledge is not provided; education is. The right words for making knowledge available are teaching and taught. Teaching is not rocket science since it has been as ancient as humanity itself, so we can intuitively understand what is meant by knowledge. Schools that provide knowledge are usually doing business, and this is the profit-based education model. Whereas schools that teach it are providing education, and this is an intuitive and purpose-based education model.

As for the teachers' DNA, being knowledgeable alone is not enough; they also must be highly qualified and resourceful. As a resource person, their personality should not only be a 'teacher', but an informer, a promoter, a believer, and an agent of change. Having said this, schools should look at how they recruit their teachers. A mere degree in the field of education field is insufficient. Likewise, a long list of work experiences in a CV is almost useless if there is no indication of a candidate's

personality, in terms of resourcefulness. For the students, especially young children, knowledge fills the mind and hearts. With the right policies, the right teaching personalities and the correct parental understanding, knowledge can give purpose or repurpose a student when correctly taught.



Parents, then, should be asking schools the following questions upon signing up their children - 'how qualified are the school's teachers', 'how resourceful are their educators', 'where were they trained' and 'how skilful are they in teaching knowledge'. I admit that it is not easy to ask these questions to school administrators, but at least they are worth considering. Perhaps, we can start local community dialogues, and - where is the PTA (parents-teachers association), again? PTAs are the best engagement platform for primary players in education to discuss more relevant issues, such as teachers' qualifications.

SKILLS

Skills are the direct results of knowledge, though not always. Some K (for brevity purpose) has skills related to them, while others do not. For example, there is mathematical knowledge, and there are mathematical skills. But there isn't history skill in a school. But why do we extract skills from K, and make it a big deal as the second ingredient? It is because of the implication it carries in teachers' personalities and schools recruitment policy. Not only a teacher has to be resourceful, but he or she must also have a *trainer's mentality*. We cannot teach a skill, but we train others for it, and it is not enough for a teacher to only 'teach'. There is an element of repeated practices in training. Schools should be on the lookout for the trainer and the coach traits when they are hiring. A teacher's past achievements at their alma

mater, their social involvements and their talents - all come handy, especially during after-school activities. While knowledge makes a student's mind and soul fulfilled, skills make them feel good! Skills develop their senses and thinking process while disciplining them in a beneficial activity. Training for a skill helps improve decision-making, increases focus and delays gratification. Just 'knowing' geography does not help, but a compass will throw a kid at work!

Parents should not only be concerned with fundamental issues like how qualified a teacher is in teaching but also what other skills they might have. Parents might want to gauge a school's collective skill set in the teachers. They can do this by developing personal relationships with teachers and have conversations over time about their talents and abilities. Another way is to look at how concerned the education system is about training young children and youth in general. For example, are the ministry and schools on the same page, when it comes to equipping students with skills? Or is everyone having their idea and preferences when it comes to skills? For example, we see the rise of skills-based learning centres in affluent areas and shopping malls, why is that so? What does this say about our collective thoughts about training skills in children? Also, does this mean that now the teachers do not necessarily have to possess the trainer's quality since training for skills can be outsourced?

CHARACTER

Schools should create an environment that builds character. The second ingredient of education (S) is one of the environmental contributors to a student's character - their morals, ethics and personality. While K and S build Intellectual Intelligence, character-building works on Emotional, Social and Spiritual Intelligence. It constructs the foundations of a student's moral and ethics in the future. Here, a teacher now becomes a mentor, a friend and a role model. During interviews, the human resource department can assess candidates by explicitly asking them what do they understand about character-building, and if they received training from dedicated courses. If necessary, they can conduct psychometric tests to make

sure the best personalities are hired to teach, train, and also develop children characters. More importantly, schools must avoid hiring people with low personal wellbeing or with a history of acute depression, or even severe mental trauma. It takes a healthy and wholesome personality to nurture others.

Sadly, almost everyone gets it wrong on what is character-building. We assume it is about reward and punishment. Or we think it is about having children make presentations in school events about ideals they have not truly internalized. Listen, hear me out, character-building is all about planting the seeds! It is virtually impossible to see the full results within the schooling years. Schools that promote the 'results' of their character-building curriculum have no idea what it is in the first place. We can only tell if this third ingredient was properly at work ten or twenty years ago, by looking at today's youth. Similarly, we can only know the result of today's character-building curriculum ten or twenty years later, by looking at future generation.

An analogy to this thinking error is as such: planting a seed which will take ten years to bear fruits, but upon seeing the beautiful stem and leaves on the third year, mistaking (and promoting) them as confirmed results! Parents LOVE hearing uplifting remarks about their children on the 'third year', to which they are always ready to listen!

The character-building process is a long-term cycle. You get good teachers for it only if they come from an education system that factored in character-building insightfully; a type of system in which its stakeholders are always putting the students at its centre. If K fulfils the minds, and S equips the persons, character-building adorns them with moral and ethics, partially in the present but only entirely in the future.

Parents can ascertain character-building aspect in a school by first and foremost looking at the physical environment - the posters, quotes and motivational graphics - any information placed all around the school. But more strategically is



by asking education managers 'what method do you use for character-building'. Be on the lookout for precise and detailed answers about how a school help build students character. For this, parents should be attentive listeners and widen their attention span when receiving the explanation. Be sure to sign children to schools that are humble in their approach and answers when it comes about building character. Schools and principals who acknowledge that character-building is a seed planting process, not a *plant-today-harvest-tomorrow delusion*.

(I would like to write in the future on whether character-building is a question of curriculum or framework, and should KSCW elements and policies exist in one single school or can it be decentralized/outsourced).

WISDOM

Ideally, you can think of a school as a holy place that teaches and imparts wisdom. It is the indirect result of K and S, and a direct result of C. In essence, wisdom is *the finer points of life*. Being wise is *the ability to make profound judgments towards reaching such points in life*. The word calculation comes to the mind when we think of it. Not as in mathematical calculations, but in terms of decision making. Wisdom comes with age, so you do not say a child has wisdom, but you would say he or she was wise in a particular incident. It does not only mean being smart. I believe that being wise is mostly incidental in young children and teenagers, but surely is deliberate in later years. When we think of this last ingredient, we think of an image of a principal who embodies the quality of wisdom. We think of his or her leadership transcending the school environment and penetrating not only students' hearts but also the teachers' – like a grandmaster 'sifu' of all the masters (teachers) and young disciples in the school.

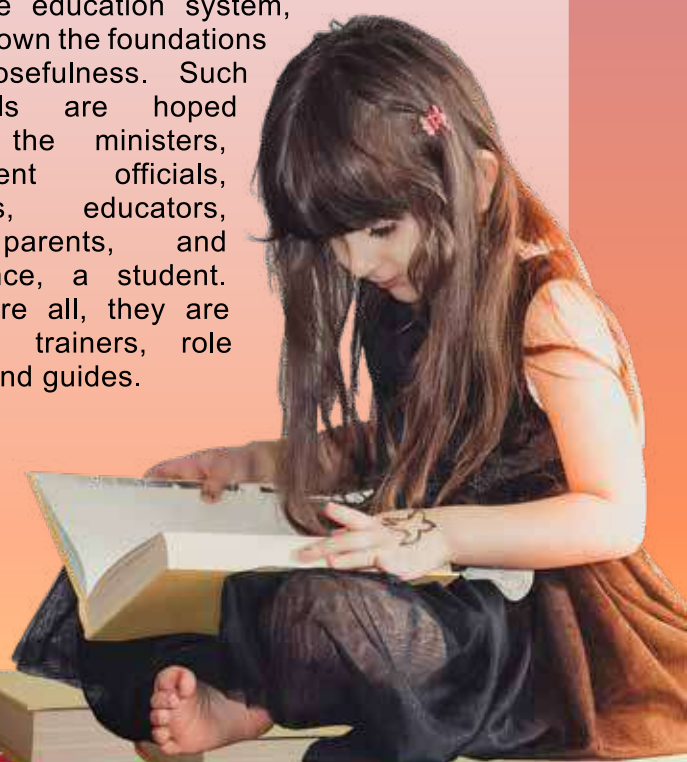
Here in W, a teacher's DNA should be versatile not only for teaching K, training S and planting the seeds of C but also as an advisor - a *parent*. Therefore, schools must hunt the people who can always give sincere advice, communicate

with the students' hearts, and encourage them to reflect upon their choices. Teachers who impart wisdom will produce thinking minds, calculative in their thoughts, speech and actions. Wisdom, when imparted cautiously, produces leaders and faithful parents. The kind of parents some wish they had and others aspire to be.

Parents can now decide better if a school is suitable in the long run for their children. Wisdom is not limited to quotes. Instead, wise and sincere individuals impart it. Studying and reflecting upon history, legacies and past figures also help build a sense of wisdom. There is almost no question specific enough you can ask the principal with regards to a school's and its teachers' ability to impart wisdom. But if the first three ingredients are sufficiently present (K, S and C), chances are the fourth one will manifest in the long run.

What is the point of KSCW? It is **P**

Knowledge and skills lead to character, and the three lead to wisdom. Where does wisdom lead? Is it the end game in education? Well, it isn't. Cumulatively, it leads to **purpose**, namely the ultimate reasons for person's life. Why does a man exist at all, and what he is to do on earth in his finite life. Purposeful individuals will enter into the same education system, and lay down the foundations of purposefulness. Such individuals are hoped to be the ministers, government officials, principals, educators, staff, parents, and were once, a student. But before all, they are teachers, trainers, role models and guides.





Putting it all together:

Parents should be on the lookout if a school is teaching knowledge, training skills, building characters and imparting wisdom by asking the right questions. Schools, on the other hand, should consistently hire the right personalities who carry with them the ability to provide the four ingredients of knowledge - education. Educators should seek to be versatile and to have a clear purpose; making sure that they carry the necessary 'genes' essential for a child's future. Parents can now stop being clueless on what to look for, and become better in making informed choices with regards to their children education. They can start fresh all conversations and discussions about education with all stakeholders

with clarity - including with their children. When private conversations and stakeholder discussions seriously consider KSCW, they will all lead to a purposeful intellectual, social and even spiritual discourses in communities.

Funding, from all levels, is an enormous challenge every other stakeholder should ask for the students who are today's youth in general. We need more than sufficient capital to teach, train, mould and guide them, to continue to keep education sacred, noble, pure and above all, simple. Ironically, the cheaper we try to make education, the more complicated it becomes. I adamantly believe in overspending for education, be it schooling or home-schooling. I believe in hiring the best people, adopting the best frameworks and providing the best environment for our children. I believe in KSCW for all, from all. The final question beg to be asked is, how purposeful is our education system, and how do we go about it from here.

What are your thoughts on the ingredients of education? Do you think I missed anything? Make sure to share with me on my LinkedIn account, so that I can improve my understanding.

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RAHMATAN LIL 'AALAMIN

More than just mercy



By Khadijah Monica

The phrase *rahmatan lil' aalamin* is used in The Qur'an when Allah (God) addresses the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.):

We sent you not, but as a mercy for all creatures. [The Qur'an 21:107].

The first word, *rahmah*, is related to Allah's attribute *ar-Rahmān*; The Most Merciful, Most Gracious. *Rahmah* is also related to the Arabic word *rahm*, which means uterus, womb, and figuratively family ties. Allah mentioned;

"I am ar-Rahmān and created the rahm (womb) and I named it after Me..."
[hadith Qudsi, Ahmad].

The Prophet (s.a.w.) mentioned that;

"Allah has more rahmah for His servants than a woman for her child" [Muslim].

He (s.a.w.) described *rahmah* as nurturing motherly love and compassion and said that Allah's *rahmah* as the sole source of all earthly *rahmah*, being the reason why creatures show *"love and kindness to one another and even a beast treats her young with affection"* [Muslim].

It can be clearly seen that with the frequently used translation of the word *rahmah* as mercy, it actually limits its meaning, as in English 'mercy' has the connotation of "forgiving, while you have the power to harm". Another appropriate word used to translate *rahmah* –even though is quite extinct in usage today- is the word 'grace'. Using the close linguistic connections above, we can therefore conclude that the comprehensive meaning of *rahmah* is captured in the following words: **mercy, grace, nurturing love and compassion** together.

Lil' aalamin means: for the universe, worlds or cosmos, which includes our family, our neighbours, all humans, plants, animals, earth, stars, jinn and angels. Thus this *rahmah* is not limited to humanity alone, but it extends to all creatures and all creation.

As an act of mercy, compassion and nurturing love for us all, The Creator of the heavens and the earth send mankind around 1400 year ago





His final Revelation and His final Prophet (s.a.w.) to guide humanity, to give us a manual for life and to show us the way back to our home; Paradise. This is the last chance for mankind to follow His guidance.

This was done by Rasulullah's (s.a.w.) uplifting character and beautiful personality. Being a person with tremendous compassion and empathy, he engaged with much kindness and affection without compromising the compassionate values enshrined in the Islamic principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This character should be embraced by all Muslims, only then, the beauty of Islam can be clearly seen by all as a beaming light and positive inspiration.

However, *rahmatan lil'aalamin* is not restricted to our exemplary behaviour and social interaction with others, as Islam is not only for Muslims. Therefore, it should also be extended to conveying and inviting people to worship The Compassionate, Loving and Merciful One God. Therefore, every Muslim should share the

message of Islam in their surroundings with compassion, love, grace and mercy.

It is about time that we work hard to improve ourselves, our akhlaaq, spread the love and compassion Allah requires from us and make this world a better, beautiful place for **everyone** to live in.

Usth. Khadijah Monica

(BA Qur'an & Sunnah Studies, IIUM)

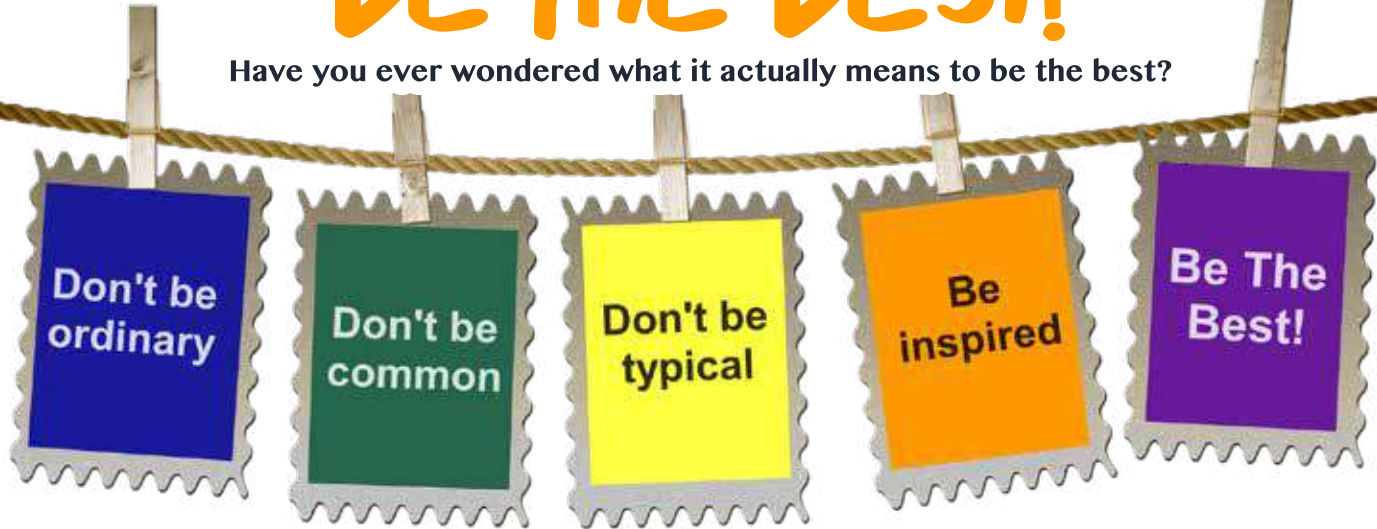
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PERKIM – Kuala Lumpur (IDIP-KL)*

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BE THE BEST!

Have you ever wondered what it actually means to be the best?



We are told that 'this is the best' or 'that was the greatest' or 'this will bring the most benefit' etc., but what authority do those people have to tell us that? In an age when we have an abundance of 'Top 10's' or 'Top 100's' lists on everything from cars to films, from foods to places, one wonders where is that list that will really provide some benefit to us.

Below, you can find 40 *hadith* from our beloved Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) in no particular order of merit, with details on how to become the best, how to have the most excellent characteristics, what really will prove most beneficial for us to know, what really are the greatest things to think about and hope for and indeed, how to become the most beloved of people to our Magnificent Creator, Allah, the *Most High*.

So go on, don't be ordinary. Don't be common. Don't be typical ... Be the best.

Sayyidina Muhammad (s.a.w.) told us:

1. "The best of the Muslims is he from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe." [Muslim]
2. "The best of people are those with the most excellent character." [Tabarani, Sahih]
3. "The best of people are those that bring most benefit to the rest of mankind." [Daraqutni, Hasan]

4. *The best of you are those who feed others.* [Aḥmad, Sahih]
5. "The best of people are those who live longest and excel in their deeds, whereas the worst of people are those who live longest and corrupt their deeds." [Tirmidhi, Sahih]
6. *Verily, obscenity and immorality are not part of Islam. Verily, the best people in Islam are those with the best character.* [Aḥmad, Sahih]



7. "The best of you during the 'Period of Ignorance' are the best of you in Islam as long as they deeply understand the religion." [Bukhari]
8. "The best of you are the best of you in fulfilling [rights]." [Ahmad, Sahih]
9. "The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family." [Tirmidhi, Sahih]
10. "The best of you are my generation, then those that follow them and then those that follow

them. Then there shall come after them a people who will betray and be untrustworthy, will give witness even though they have not been asked to, will make vows yet will not fulfil them and obesity will appear amongst them." [Bukhari]

11. "The best of you are those who feed others and return greetings." [Abu Ya'la, Hasan]
12. Shall I not tell you what distinguishes the best of you from the worst of you? The best of you are those from whom goodness is expected and people are safe from their evil. The worst of you are those from whom goodness is not expected and people are not safe from their evil. [at-Tirmidhī, Sahih]
13. "The best thing mankind has been given is excellent character." [Hakim, Sahih]
14. "The best of the world's women are four: Maryam bint 'Imran, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Fatimah bint Muhammad and Asiyah the wife of Fir'awn." [Ahmad, Sahih]
15. "The most beloved of deeds according to Allah are the continuous ones, even if they are little/small." [Agreed upon]



16. "The most beloved of deeds according to Allah is that you die and yet your tongue is still moist from the remembrance of Allah." [Ibn Hibban, Hasan]
17. "The most beloved words according to Allah the Most High are four: Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, La ilaha illallah and Allahu Akbar; there is no problem with which one you start with." [Muslim]
18. "The most beloved of speech according to Allah is when the servant says, 'Subhanallahi wa bihamdihī' [How Transcendent is Allah and we praise Him!]." [Muslim]

19. "The most beloved of people according to Allah is he who brings most benefit, and the most beloved of deeds according to Allah the Mighty, the Magnificent, is that you bring happiness to a fellow Muslim, or relieve him of distress, or pay off his debt or stave away hunger from him. It is more beloved to me that I walk with my brother Muslim in his time of need than I stay secluded in the mosque for a month. Whoever holds back his anger, Allah will cover his faults and whoever suppresses his fury while being able to execute it, Allah will fill his heart with satisfaction on the Day of Standing. Whoever walks with his brother Muslim in need until he establishes that for him, Allah will establish his feet firmly on the Day when all feet shall slip. Indeed, bad character ruins deeds just as vinegar ruins honey." [Tabarani, Hasan]
20. "The best of your leaders are those that you love and they love you, you supplicate for them and they supplicate for you. The worst of your leaders are those that you hate and they hate you, you curse them and they curse you." [Muslim]
21. "The best of you are those who are best in paying off their debts." [Tahawi, Sahih]
22. "The best of you are those with the longest lives and most excellent character." [Bazzar, Sahih]
23. "The best of you are those with the longest lives and best in action." [Hakim, Sahih]
24. "The best of you are those with the softest shoulders during prayer." [Bayhaqi, Hasan]
25. "The best of you are those who are best to their wives." [Tirmidhi, Sahih]
26. "The best of you are those who are best to their families." [Tabarani, Sahih]



27. "The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it." [Darimi, Sahih]
28. "The best of companions according to Allah are those who are best to their companion and the best of neighbours according to Allah are those that are best to their neighbour." [Tirmidhi, Sahih]
29. "The most beloved deed according to Allah is to have faith in Allah, then to maintain the ties of kinship, and then to command to good and forbid the wrong. The most abhorrent of deeds according to Allah is to associate partners with Him, then to cut the ties of kinship." [Abu Ya'la, Hasan]
30. "The most beloved servant of Allah is he who is most beneficial to his dependents." [Zawa'id az-Zuhd, Hasan]
31. "The best of all deeds is the prayer at its earliest time." [Tirmidhi, Sahih]
32. "The best of all deeds is the prayer in its right time, to treat the parents honourably and Jihad in the path of Allah." [Al-Khatib, Sahih]
33. "The best of Jihad is that man strives against his soul and desires." [Daylami, Sahih]
34. "The best of the Believers is the most excellent of them in character." [Ibn Majah, Sahih]
35. "The best of the Believers with respect to Islam is the one from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe; and the best of the Believers with respect to Iman are the most excellent of them in character; and the best of those who migrate is he who migrates from that which Allah the Most High has prohibited; and the best of Jihad is when one strives against his soul for the sake of Allah, the Mighty, the Magnificent." [Tabarani, Sahih]
36. "The best of you are those who, when they are seen, inspire others to remember Allah Almighty." [Ibn Mājah, Sahih li ghayri]
37. "The best Jihad is the word of justice in front of the oppressive Sultan." [Abu Dawud]
38. "The best words are the Words of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (s.a.w.)." [Ibn Majah]
39. "A time will come that the best property of a Muslim will be sheep which he will take on the top of mountains and the places of rainfall (valleys) so as to flee with his religion from afflictions." [Bukhari]
40. "RasulAllah was asked; "Which act in Islam is the best?" The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said: To feed the hungry and to greet with peace those you know and those you do not know." [Bukhari & Muslim]



In sum, the best Muslims are those who are best at applying the comprehensive ethical virtues taught by Islam: justice, compassion, kindness, piety, devotion, humility, truthfulness, and so on. They treat others how they would like to be treated, they regularly give charity, they care for their families, they refrain from harming others, and they earn people's trust. They are devoted to the Qur'an and to seeking religious knowledge to apply in their lives, forsaking the vanities of the worldly life for the Hereafter.

May Allah make us among the best Muslims with the best character. Ameen.

Extracted from:

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First Muharram for our Qalb

First Muharram, Every Year,
knowingly or unknowingly brings all of us closer to our Destiny.
May our Qalb realize this.

Let dawn rays of First Muharram transform our Qalb
towards desire for migration to achieve success
spiritually, physically and socially.

Let First Covenant of our first day of Muharram be
"I will become a Peaceful Man to help bring peace and stability on Earth"

Let First Day of every Muharram reaffirms our inner-self migration of self-purification
towards achieving total victory over illiteracy, sickness
and failure to receive Qur'anic guidance

Let First Day of Muharram be our first step to become a successful believer
for conscious transformation of our Qalb towards Qalbun Saleem.

Yaa Allah forgive our parents, and all our sins, major, minor,
that we have done knowingly or unknowingly until today.

Yaa Allah grant us all the best of future with Your Barakah and Rahmah

May the blessing and peace be upon sayyidina Muhammad,
his family and all his companions.

Dr. Sayyid AlKazimi
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SUCCESS

NOT FOR SALE

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Global ukhuwwah

“ Most of the time,
failures are the results of
intentional denial of Truth and
victories are unexpected results
of intentional acceptance of Truth ”



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