

THE MALAY CONCEPT OF **SEJAHTERA** FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: AN INTRODUCTION

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human beings -- irrespective of religious beliefs – generally aspire for, and look forward to, a life in which they are at peace and in harmony with themselves, with others, with the environment and -- for those who believe in a Transcendent Supreme Power -- with the Creator, or God or The Supreme Being, or the Highest Object of Worship/Veneration, depending on how the Absolute is perceived or defined in their religions, philosophies or worldviews. In addition to peaceful and harmonious relationships, the most desirable state of existence that humans would be pleased with is one that provides safety, peace, security, and – withal, a sense of inner tranquility or wellbeing, of joy and happiness, of success or triumph, all of which should be of enduring positive impact on their lives. Such a perception of human life and wellbeing is in consonance with the concept of *sejahtera* in the Malay language. The word *sejahtera* (roughly translated into English as “wellbeing” or “prosperity”) is widely used in Malaysia and Indonesia as a fundamental concept of human existence which is usually applied to various dimensions of life: physical, ecological, psychological, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, economic, political, governance, educational, social, cultural and religious.

Given its importance and central role in the building, nurturing and sustaining of a humane, peaceful, balanced and prosperous civilisation in this period of heightened global crises, in which most of mankind are currently starving for *kesejahteraan* struggling against an unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the Malay concept of *sejahtera* -- in the present writer’s humble opinion -- should be reviewed and re-examined by Muslim scholars and intellectuals for the purpose of building an

alternative paradigm of holistic and sustainable development from the worldview of *Tauḥīd* (belief-system of Islamic monotheism).

Before going into the subject proper, it is useful for the IIUM community to be reminded that, as an international Islamic university from day one, IIUM was established in 1983 on the basis of the Islamic philosophy of education, which emphasises the ontology, epistemology and axiology of the Qur'an as well as the Islamic vision of developing a holistic human being and a holistic civilisation. It must be mentioned that IIUM was conceived as an alternative to the secular or nationalistic system of higher education. Against the background of the euphoric advent of the 15th *Hijriyyah* Century (in November 1979), several Malaysian Islamic scholars, academics, politicians and Islamic NGOs were advocating the need for the reform (*Iṣlāḥ*), renewal (*tajdīd*) and reconstruction (*i`ādatu'l-binā`*) of contemporary civilisation in accordance with the worldview of Islamic monotheism (*Tauḥīd*). (On the origin of IIUM and the role of Malay Islamic reformist thought in British Malaya, see M. Kamal Hassan 2013: 23-45; 2019: 35-57). In pursuing this civilisational transformative vision, the post-2000 leaders of IIUM stated, in one of its strategic plans, that IIUM should aim at becoming an international authoritative reference centre on Islamic perspectives on contemporary human civilisational issues and on the intellectual and spiritual-moral Islamicisation in the construction and production of human knowledge. The university is therefore expected by Muslim communities, in Malaysia and overseas, to provide correct and authentic Islamic ideas, perspectives, solutions or paradigms on important and major issues regarding human life, culture, society and civilisation.

Lately, the Malay concept of *sejahtera* has received wide attention from the IIUM community. It is an important concept which deals with the issue of quality of life, society and civilisation. It is a contemporary issue which requires from IIUM an Islamic intellectual interpretation and understanding for the benefit of the Malay and non-Malay communities in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. In particular, the Muslim communities in the ASEAN region have been looking forward for a long time – much more so after being liberated from the un-*sejahtera* colonial rule for a few centuries -- to a life that is holistically *sejahtera* in terms of relationship with The Creator-Master-Sustainer, with fellow Muslims, with non-Muslim neighbours, fellow citizens, foreigners, with the natural environment and with their inner selves.

As we have to understand the meaning of *sejahtera* from the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, it is crucial that we explain what we mean by this worldview. The word *tauḥīd* literally means the affirmation of the absolute oneness of God (Allah), while the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, as contained in the Qur'an, provides the fundamental philosophical underpinnings, as well as metaphysical, theological or ethical principles and values for Islamic perspectives and interpretations of human intellectual or socio-cultural constructs. This Qur'an-based worldview is a *Weltanschauung* (in Arabic: *al-ru'yah al-kauniyyah al-shāmilah li'l-wujūd /al-taṣawwur al-kāmil al-shāmil/al-naẓar ila'l-ḥayāh/*) founded upon a deep faith and conviction in the Absolute Oneness, Absolute Sovereignty and Absolute Authority of Allah *Subḥānahu wa Ta'ālā* (S.W.T., an abbreviation meaning "glorified and exalted be He"). It is crucial to understand that The One True God in the religion of Islam is not just The Creator of mankind, of the world and the whole Cosmos including mankind, but He is at one and the same time the One and Only Object of Worship (*Al-Ilāh*) for mankind and all creatures, The Absolute Owner (*Al-Mālik*), The Perpetual Sustainer, The Nourisher (*Al-Rabb*) and Manager (*Al-Mudabbir*) of all the worlds. He is The Living Source and Provider of Absolute Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*), True Knowledge (*al-'Ilm*) and Wisdom (*al-Ḥikmah*), The All-Wise Provider of Guidance (*Al-Hādī*) for mankind, The Absolute Law-Giver (*Al-Ḥākim*), The Most Compassionate Ruler and The Most Just Judge of mankind in the Hereafter, the eternal life for all mankind either in Paradise or in Perdition after the Resurrection and the Final Judgment, depending on how human beings have lived their lives and built their societies and civilisations. In this worldview, Allah's final revelation (*al-waḥy*) to mankind, the Glorious al-Qur'ān which was revealed to His Final Messenger Muḥammad (*ṣalla'Liāhu `alaihi wa sallam*, abbreviated as S.A.W., meaning "may the peace and blessings of Allah S.W.T. be upon him") the Exemplar *par excellence* of the religion of complete submission to the will of Allah S.W.T., i.e. *Al-Islām*, contains the most comprehensive Divine Guide (*al-Hudā/al-Hidāyah*) and the Right Way (*al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm, al-Sharī'ah*) for human beings to follow – complemented by the Prophetic Sunnah (the normative words, deeds and conduct of Prophet *ṣalla'Liāhu `alaihi wa sallam*) – to obtain real goodness-wellbeing (*al-ḥasanah*) in this world and everlasting real goodness-wellbeing (*al-ḥasanah*) in *Dār al-Ākhirah* (the Hereafter, the Next Life after Resurrection). The human intellectual faculty (*'aql*) was meant by Allah S.W.T. to help mankind play its developmental and civilisational roles in the proper way. Therefore it was intended to function not in opposition to the wisdom and guidelines

of divine revelation – as is the case in modern secularised education, cultures, societies and civilisation which are based on human reason only -- but in harmony with and subservient to divine will and revelation.

As adherents of the religion of Islam and the worldview of *Tauḥīd*, the Muslim intelligentsia, scholars, thinkers, professionals and intellectuals who are most aware of, and most disturbed by the prolonged malaise of the Ummah and the acute crisis of leadership in Muslim countries, are therefore expected to internalise the importance and indispensability of this Tauhidic worldview -- as the general conceptual and philosophical frame of reference -- in understanding the Islamic perspective of *sejahtera*, the holistic and comprehensive wellbeing, success and happiness. Then they ought to impart the correct knowledge of the concept to the Muslim priveleged elites, decision-makers, political leaders, professionals, administrators, academics and students as well as to fellow-citizens of other faiths and religions. Muslim scholars in this country owe a moral responsibility to share this important Islamic knowledge and vision to the multi-religious and multi-ethnic society of Malaysia with its different conceptions of the good life, wellbeing or success.

Seeking to understand an Islamic perspective of the popular Malay concept of *sejahtera* has also become an urgent task, bearing in mind the fact that many traditional and indigenous Malay concepts had undergone a process of Islamicisation, such as the words *Tuhan* (Islamicised to “Allah”), *sembahyang* (to *solat*), *budi pekerti* (to *adab* and *akhlak*) and *Lebaran* and *Hari Raya* (to *Eidul Fitri* or *Eidul Adha*), after Islam became the new religion and way of life of the Malay-Indonesian peoples several centuries before the advent of European colonialism. In the same way, the term *sejahtera* has acquired, over the centuries of immersion in the milieu of Malay-Islamic civilisation, a new value-added and Islamicised meaning, which in our view, can be translated as: “A STATE OF HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATED WELLBEING CONSISTING OF SUCCESS, HAPPINESS, SECURITY AND BALANCE IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE HEREAFTER” [underlined by the present writer], given the fact that the belief and conviction in the the Day of Resurrection with everlasting Hereafter (*Akhirat* in Malay) is the second most important conviction or belief (*īmān*) in the religion of Islam. Besides, the Qur’an teaches that human beings have been instructed by The One and Only Creator and Living Sustainer to live on His planet Earth as His *Khalifahs* (Vicegerent, Successor, Custodian) in order to develop it as an *Amānah* (trust)

responsibly and truthfully, so that they would attain goodness-wellbeing (*al-ḥasanah*) in this life as well as goodness-wellbeing (*al-ḥasanah*) in the Hereafter (*al-Ākhirah*). (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 201; *al-A`rāf* 7: 56). These verses underscore the importance of living purposefully on earth, but the Qur'an always reminds that the ultimate objective is in the Hereafter, the life of eternal bliss and everlasting happiness in *al-Jannah* (Paradise). One particular verse states this very clearly:

But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters. (Q. *al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 77; *al-A`lā* 87: 17)

Therefore, in seeking everlasting happiness and absolute wellbeing in the Hereafter as the ultimate destination of human life, human beings and Muslims, in particular, are not to belittle or neglect or, worse still, forget the leadership and civilisational roles that are meant to be carried out by the Islamic Ummah (Universal Islamic Community) (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 143, *Āl`Imrān* 3: 104, 110). Human beings as servants of The Absolute Master-Owner-Sustainer are commanded by Him to make the best use of this necessary, beneficial but brief earthly existence and the marvellous world of nature that He created with the mindset of gratitude (*shukr*) to the Compassionate Sustainer – for all the abundant Sustainer-given bounties (sing. *ni`mah*), resources (sing. *fadl*) in the whole Cosmos, which He has made subservient (*musakhkharāt*, for His servants-cum-*khalifahs*) (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 54; *al-Naḥl* 16: 12, 79; *al-Jāthiyah* 45: 12, 13). With the right faith and with all kinds of good deeds, the servants-*khalifahs* would achieve what Allah S.W.T. calls *Ḥayāh Ṭayyibah* (life of all-round goodness, virtue and wellbeing) in this transient world of *al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā* (Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 97). In compliance with the guidance (*hudā, hidāyah*) of The Compassionate Creator-Master-Sustainer, all human beings' developmental efforts in different domains of socio-cultural life become a form of worshipping and serving (*ibādah*) The Creator-Master-Sustainer as He had intended when He decided to create the human species (S. *al-Dhāriyāt* 51: 56). (On the need to understand nature as manifesting the Signs of Allah S.W.T. see M.Kamal Hassan (chief ed.) 2015).

With regard to the subject of Islamicisation of Malay concepts, it is interesting to reflect at this juncture that, just as the Malay word for the world or Earth, *bumi* (which is from the Sanskrit word *Bhumi*), and the Malay word *syurga* (from Sanskrit “*Svarga/Swarga*”) have also acquired Islamicised meanings in consonance with the

above-mentioned worldview, similarly the use of the term *sejahtera* or *kesejahteraan* in the original draft formulations of the *Falsafah Pendidikan Negara* (F.P.K., the Nation's Educational Philosophy) was understood by Muslims from the perspective of the worldview of Islam, not from the pre-Islamic, secular worldview, polytheistic, agnostic, or atheistic perspectives. Regarding the F.P.K. it is useful for the present-day students and the Malaysian younger generation to know that the present writer could recall the exciting historical context and experience in Malaysian politics of the late 1980s when some Malay-Muslim academics of UKM, IIUM (including the present writer), IAB (Institut Aminuddin Baki) and ABIM were approached separately by the Ministry of Education to contribute to drafting of the first *Falsafah Pendidikan Negara* (FPN) in 1988. As Muslim academics and activists, they were most conscious of the Islamic meanings of Malay terminologies when they consented to the use of the words "*kesejahteraan diri*" (wellbeing of the self) and "*kepercayaan dan kepatuhan kepada Tuhan*" (belief in and obedience to God) without any reference to Islam in the *Falsafah* text. Bearing in mind that since the *Falsafah* was meant for the whole multi-religious citizens and nation of Malaysia, they did not insist on, nor wanted to impose unilaterally, the Islamic interpretation of the words "*insan yang seimbang dan harmonis*", "*rohani*", "*kepercayaan dan kepatuhan kepada Tuhan*", "*sejahtera*" and others. This was the compromise they were willing to concede in good faith, despite the fact that the minister of education at the time (1986-1991), Y.B. Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, was well-known as a prominent young "Islamist" Malay politician and former Islamic youth leader, while all new government policies or initiatives then had to be in line with the policy of "*Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam*" (Inculcation of Islamic Values) which was introduced by Dr. Mahathir Mohamad after he became the Prime Minister in 1981 and then co-opted Saudara Anwar Ibrahim in 1982 to become his political partner, supporter and Islamic protagonist. (see Hayati Ismail 2019: 118-122 in Dzukifli Abdul Razak & Rosnani Hashim (eds) 2019).

As a small footnote on Indonesian history and politics in 1950s, this historical event in the "Malaysia of resurgent Islam" of the 70s and 80s reminds the present writer of the great political compromise, also made in good faith, in Islamically resurgent but newly born Republic of Indonesia, that leaders of MASJUMI (Islamic) Party, such as Bapak Mohammad Natsir, Prawoto Mangkusasmito and Soekiman Wirjosandjojo, conceded in the early 1950s in the final formulation of PANCASILA, the official ideology

of the Republic of Indonesia. The first pillar of PANCASILA, i.e. *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Belief in the One and Only God) was the compromise conceded by Islamic political party leaders to accommodate the stand of the minority Christian leaders (although Muslims were the overwhelming majority which constituted more than 90% of the population at the time) who were opposed to the idea of Negara Islam (Islamic State) or to the Islamic monotheistic notion of God as advocated by MASYUMI leaders. (see B.J. Boland 1983).

Bearing in mind that Islam has the largest number of adherents in Southeast Asia, that Muslim culture is the dominant culture of the region, and that Muslim communities throughout the region prefer a life of *Selamat dan Sejahtera* (with peace, safety, wellbeing and prosperity) for the present as well as for the future generations - Muslim Southeast Asia, in our humble opinion, could represent in the near future a good model of the *sejahtera* paradigm of wholesome and holistic human and national development, which is inclusive of peaceful inter-religious coexistence and the Malaysian vision of "Shared Prosperity", in the context of plurality of cultures, religions and political systems in ASEAN.

2. THE LINGUISTIC DEFINITION AND CONNOTATIONS OF SEJAHTERA

2.1. The word *sejahtera* is defined by Kamus Dewan of Malaysia as follows:

aman dan makmur [peace and prosperity], senang dan tenteram [ease, happy, and tranquil], terpelihara drpd bencana [protected from disaster or anything untoward] (kesusahan, gangguan, dll [difficulties, disturbance, etc.).

menjadikan *sejahtera* [make something *sejahtera*], mengamankan [making something peaceful], menyelamatkan [making something safe]. Contoh ayat: "Manusia mesti bekerja keras untuk mendapat *sejahtera* di dunia dan di akhirat." (*Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat*, prpm.dbp.gov.my. Accessed June 1, 2020)

2.2. The *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* defines *sejahtera* as follows:

aman sentosa dan makmur [peace, tranquility and prosperous]; selamat (terlepas dari segala macam gangguan) [safe and secure [freed from all forms of disturbance];

kesejahteraan: hal atau keadaan *sejahtera*; keamanan, keselamatan, ketenteraman [wellbeing: a condition or state of wellbeing; peaceful, safe and tranquil condition] (<https://kbbi.we.id/sejahtera>. Accessed June 1, 2020)

2.3. According to an Indonesia writer, Ririn Agustina:

Sejahtera [wellbeing] in my opinion is a process of social existence which is safe, tranquil, peaceful, just and prosperous. As a general terminology, sejahtera points to a condition that is good, a human condition in which the people are in a state of prosperity, good health dan tranquility. In economics, sejahtera is linked with material gain.

(<https://www.kompasiana.com/agustinar/59a625cc2350df1e3d4c1172/sejahtera>
a. Accessed June 1, 2020)

2.4. The Indonesian Concept of “Welfare State”

In Indonesia, the concept of ‘welfare state’ is known as Negara Kesejahteraan (<https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kesejahteraan>;cf.https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negara_kesejahteraan. Accessed June 4, 2020). According to one Indonesian writer:

The Welfare State theory is a theory that is in harmony with the basic policy of the Indonesian State whereby the government guarantees the actualisation of the people’s welfare (kesejahteraan rakyat) based on the four pillars -- a) Democracy, b) Rule of Law, c)The Human Rights Protection), d) Social Justice and Absence of Discrimination.

(<https://www.suara.com/yoursay/2020/05/13/143239/teori-negara-kesejahteraan-di-indonesia-dalam-penanganan-covid-19>. Accessed June 4, 2020; Cf. <https://kumparan.com/bathara-kresno/konsep-welfare-state-theory-maksimalkan-peran-pemerintah>. Accessed June 4, 2020)

3. THE MEANING OF SEJAHTERA AND ITS ELABORATION AND PROPAGATION BY TAN SRI PROF. EMERITUS DR. DZULKIFLI ABDUL RAZAK

With regard to the intellectual discourse on *sejahtera* in contemporary Malaysian context, no one – to the best of our knowledge -- has been as active, as persistent, as innovative and as prolific, both locally and internationally, in advocating and propagating the importance of the value and virtue of *sejahtera* in education, sustainable development goals, restructuring of role of universities, higher education leadership and nation-building than Tan Sri Prof. Emeritus Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, the current Rector of IIUM. It is noteworthy that this “*Maha Guru of Sejahtera*” launched his intellectual and educational jihad during his leadership of USM as its 5th Vice-Chancellor from 2000-2011, then as President of the Association of Southeast Asia Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) from 2007-2008, followed by assuming the 14th presidency of the International Association of Universities (IAU) from 2012-2016. He was awarded in 2017 the Gilbert Medal, the highest honour bestowed by

Universitas 21 (U21), “in recognition of his longterm commitment to an integrated approach to internationalisation, to a sustainable (*sejahtera*) approach to international HE and his tireless work to support and develop the clearly public good dimension of HE” as well as being “distinctive in his willingness to challenge western knowledge systems and to support the development and dissemination of alternative views on science, philosophy and education...” (Dzulkifli Abdul Razak 2017: 266). Prof. Dzulkifli explains the historical background of his intellectual passion with the concept of *sejahtera* as follows:

Indeed it was at USM that the idea of *sejahtera* first emerged in early 2000 as an impetus to ignite transformational mindset changes in embracing the concept of sustainable development through education. This was before sustainable development was fashionable in an educational setting, before the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). (*sejahtera-comes-alive-in-korea*.www.rce-penang.usm.my/latestnews/67 26 May 2015. Accessed June 1, 2020).

Prof. Dzulkifli has clarified that the comprehensive scope and force of the social implications of the concept of *sejahtera* can be fully appreciated only when we understand its 10 intertwined dimensions:

The embodiment of *sejahtera* goes beyond the conventional three Ps of Planet, People and Prosperity. Instead *sejahtera* has at least 10 dimensions that could be summed up by the acronym SPICES: spiritual, physical, intellectual, cultural, cognitive, emotional, ecological, environmental, economics, and societal as a platform for holistic learning and living. (*sejahtera-comes-alive-in-korea* from www.rce-penang.usm.my/latest news/67 26 May 2015. Accessed June 1, 2020).

The meaning of *sejahtera* as explained by him is as follows:

Sejahtera in the Malay language is not easily rendered into other languages because of its comprehensive and multi-layered meaning and nuances. It underscores that indigenous knowledge and wisdom have had their own context of uniqueness and strength that is relevant to the local community over the years.

Although it is often cursorily translated as “wellbeing” or even “prosperity”, its inherent meaning is much deeper than that. In fact, it is “beyond prosperity and wellbeing”. It is human-centric in that it spans the macrocosmic-microcosmic nexus. The earlier because it relates humans to the external environment — nature, fellow beings, including other species. And microcosmic because it embraces the “self” and the inner (esoteric) dimensions, including spiritual consciousness, and the Creator.

(<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2019/05/493104/introduce-sejahtera-values-education>. Accessed June 1, 2020)

The concept, as pointed out by him, was introduced in USM for a special educational purpose, namely:

as a way to empower and entice the campus community towards a common set of values in building and safeguarding co-existence. It embraces “education” aligned towards a global agenda by providing a platform that facilitates the embedding of *sejahtera* firmly in the education ecosystem from a leadership position. It introduces human-centric dimensions of leadership focused on balance and trusteeship, in addition to justice, as a continuum of values-based leadership evolution into the 21st century. This in turn is encapsulated in the overall vision of “humanising education” for *insan sejahtera* that directly addresses the “anthropocentric” gaps as a major cause of the global crises as an outcome of education without soul.

(<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2019/05/493104/introduce-sejahtera-values-education>. Accessed June 1, 2020).

In promoting and championing the concept of *sejahtera*, Prof. Dzulkifli frequently and passionately invokes the important historic document, which is often forgotten — “to be given a new lease of life”, he says -- called the National Philosophy of Education (FPK) first formulated in 1988 and then slightly modified in 1996. He says:

The FPK clearly promotes the values of “balanced” (*seimbang*) and “harmonious” (*harmonis*) [human personality] as an outcome of education, viz., *insan sejahtera*. These are emerging concepts that have begun to find their way into the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation’s (UNESCO) Education for Sustainable Development. It then continues to define what is intended by “balanced” and “harmonious” — namely with respect to four vital dimensions of intellect, physical, emotional and spiritual. (<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2019/02/457407/sejahtera-quality-education>. Accessed June 1, 2020)

In a very informative and thought-provoking chapter, “Decolonising the Paradigm of Sustainable Development of through the Traditional Concept of *Sejahtera*” in the book *Academia and Communities: Engaging for Change*, published by the United Nations University, Tokyo, in 2018, Tan Sri Prof. Dzulkifli refers to the Sanskrit etymology of *sejahtera* in Malay language and the socio-cultural impact of the philosophy of *sejahtera* on the nature of statehood of precolonial Malay coastal and riverine polities:

Today, it [*sejahtera*] is more often associated with the idea of ‘balanced well-being’ or even ‘coexisting with common shared values and prosperity,’ but its essential meaning is ‘beyond well-being of individuals, institutions, organisations and society.’ However, the origin of the word is probably not local. When and how it started to be used in the Malay language is unclear, but its etymology can be traced to the Sanskrit language. The possible words from which *sejahtera* was derived include *sadhya* (celestial being), *sudatra* (granting

gifts), and *sucitra* (distinguished). Although the meanings of these Sanskrit words only narrowly imply the meaning of *sejahtera* as it is understood today, all of them have a strong positive connotation.....

This concept led to the economic and political importance of the port-polities, which developed under very special circumstances, in contrast to many great kingdoms of Southeast Asia (Coedes 1968; Paludan 1998) (Eds. Zinaida Fadeeva, Laima Galkute, Kiran Chhokar 2018: 213)

Prof. Dzulkifli also promotes the special significance of the concept of *sejahtera* as “A Philosophy of Sustainable Living and Balanced Coexistence” in the following words:

Taken together the status of *sejahtera* can be described as a balanced lifestyle summarised by at least ten different elements neatly woven into the acronym SPICES, namely spiritual, physico-psychological, intellectual, cognitive, cultural, ethical, emotional, ecological, economic, and societal dimensions (Figure 1). Not only must each aspect be in balance in itself, but each must be in balance with all the rest to achieve an overall outcome. (Zinaida Fadeeva, Laima Galkute, Kiran Chhokar (eds) 2018: 211. Cf. <https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2019/02/457407/sejahtera-quality-education>. Accessed June 1, 2020)

The importance of the harmonious and integrated relationship of the 10 dimensions of *sejahtera* with in-depth meaning, especially when considering the different cultural contexts and nuances in which *sejahtera* values are located has been emphasised by Prof. Dzulkifli thus:

Collaborative relationship in particular embraces compassion, empathy, and the uncompromising spirit of oneness transcending differences and bitterness, bringing about the much-needed close relationship, coexistence, and interdependency traits are needed to cater to the millions who are under urgent threat of global warming and climate change. The unprecedented occurrence of crisis after crisis cannot be handled effectively without nurturing the relationship that binds people via a set of common values and ethics. (Zinaida Fadeeva, Laima Galkute, Kiran Chhokar(eds.) 2018: 213)

Thanks to the persistence, dedication and smart advocacy efforts of Prof. Dzulkifli and his remarkable achievements in getting USM officially recognised as an APEX University in Malaysia and also a Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) -- under the auspices of United Nations University, to implement the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project of the United Nations -- the concept of *sejahtera* has become a transnational Asia-Pacific concept when South Korea started the *Sejahtera* Project in 2011 which comprised of an eco-park and the *Sejahtera* Center, a creative

research and teaching centre. The establishment of *Sejahtera* Network Committee and *Sejahtera* Fellowship programme of the Asia-Pacific RCEs has transformed the concept of *sejahtera* from a Malay word into a universal terminology. Naturally, Prof. Dzulkifli was overjoyed when the *Sejahtera* Center and the *Sejahtera* Forest were officially opened in Tongyeong, in South Korea on 23rd May 2015. He remarks, “Nothing is more satisfying than an idea that is translated into reality, especially a rather abstract one as a form of social innovation.” (*sejahtera-comes-alive-in-korea* from <http://www.rce-penang.usm.my/index.php/what-s-on/latest-news/67-26> May 2015. Accessed June 4, 2020).

We, in IIUM, are again grateful to the current Rector of IIUM for achieving in May 2020 – amidst the Corona-19 Controlled Movement Order – another feather in the cap of IIUM, namely the official recognition by UNESCO of its being appointed as a new Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) for Greater Gombak area. Regarding the significance of the *Sejahtera* Forest in Tongyeong, Prof. Dzulkifli makes the following observation:

The forest is particularly meaningful not only because it is next to a national park, but more so because it is also a ‘living laboratory’ that embellishes ‘the unique traditional culture of the Asia-Pacific region with an emphasis on coexistence.’ Indeed, this is well summed up by the vision of the *Sejahtera* Project: “Coexistence between human beings, man and nature, present and future generations.” (Zinaida Fadeeva, Laima Galkute, Kiran Chhokar (eds.) 2018: 215).

In leading and championing the *sejahtera* discourse in Malaysia, Prof. Dzulkifli has initiated in 2017 a *Sejahtera* Leadership Initiative (SLI) in USIM to address the issues of ESD from a leadership position, after he became the Chairman of the Board of Directors of USIM. He has also advocated the formation of SLIs in African countries during his African visits. Upon being appointed as the 5th Rector of IIUM in 2018, Prof. Dzulkifli established the *Sejahtera* Centre for Sustainability and Humanity in 2019 to promote the mission of “Humanising Education through Maqāṣid al-Sharīḥ and Sustainable Development.” His inclusion of the Maqāṣid al-Sharīḥ (Ultimate Objectives of the Sharīḥ) principles in the *sejahtera* has, no doubt, reinforced the Islamic interpretation and legitimacy of the concept. With regard to the socio-economic aspect of national wellbeing, he was quick to correct misconceptions pertaining to the phrase “*memastikan kesejahteraan rakyat*” [ensuring the people’s wellbeing] in the 2019 Budget:

The reality is that the keyword *sejahtera* is more comprehensive and sophisticated than just “socio-economic wellbeing”—which is just one layer of its meaning. *Sejahtera* is a rather multilayered concept that conveys a deeper meaning than any single word can convey. As such it has no equivalent in other languages, neither can it be accurately translated into different languages due to its close cultural leaning and nuances to the local Malay(sian) tradition. (<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2018/11/430073/what-sejahtera>. Accessed June 1, 2020)

From his perspective, the term “socio-economic wellbeing” limits the scope of the meaning of “quality of life” because, “Life” as in “quality of life” is invariably related to the “spiritual being” first rather than the material being which is socio-economically defined and determined. Otherwise, values/virtues such as happiness, love and mutual respect will be marginalised”. (<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2018/11/430073/what-sejahtera>, accessed June 1, 2020). He cautions the Malaysian public and policy-makers that:

Unless *sejahtera* is understood in a “continuous, holistic and integrated manner”, as “the fountainhead of good values/virtues that are innately human (and divine too) that will lead to a righteous and balanced way of life “*sejahtera*” in all its forms and taglines are nothing but empty clichés. (<https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2018/11/430073/what-sejahtera>. Accessed June 1, 2020)

The formation of *Sejahtera* Education Advocates (SEA) on 24th June 2019 as an independent apolitical citizens’ initiative with its secretariat in IIUM bolsters the multifaceted relevance and value of *sejahtera*. A *Sejahtera* Leadership Programme is being implemented in IIUM and the transformation of IIUM Curriculum enriched by the freshly introduced concepts of *sejahtera*, *maqāṣid al-sharīah* and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is in the initial stages of formulation.

While emphasising the importance of actualising the values of *Insan Sejahtera* (*Sejahtera Man*) which stem from his/her spiritual essence and identity with the *qalb* (spiritual heart) at the centre of being, bearing in mind the revitalised National Philosophy of Education, the nurturing of *Sejahtera* (*Qalb*-driven) Leadership in the university – together with the original IIUM Vision and Mission of “TRIPLE I’CE” (Integration, Islamisation, Internationalisation, Comprehensive Excellence) -- Prof. Dzulkilfi continues to remind his audience of the centrality of the spiritual core of man in the domains of higher education, educational leadership and sustainable development. By topping up the discourse in IIUM late last year with the Qur’anic concept, Prophetic mission and methodology of *Raḥmatan li’l-`Ālamīn* (Mercy to all

the worlds: Q. *al-Anbiyā'* 21: 107) -- a move which the present writer appreciated and applauded because, for too long, that divinely ordained Prophetic mission has been neglected in the national development of Malaysia and in the reconstruction of contemporary civilisation – Prof. Dzulkifli is, in our opinion, putting across the IIUM platform a new civilisational “grand narrative” (as the postmodernists would construe it) in order to change or reorient the mindset of those Muslim elites in Malaysia and other Muslim countries.

In our view the change and transformation in the worldview and mindset of Muslim elites and leaders in Muslim countries are long overdue because they have been trapped, as it were, for many decades in the quagmire of global systemic delusions-cum -deceptions (*ghurūr*), turmoil, mischief, corruption (*fasād*), and international geopolitical hypocrisy (*nifāq*). The reorientation, reeducation and intellectual reform of Muslim elites, leaders and policy-makers – towards the alternative paradigm of *Tauhīd* – particularly in the new post Covid-19 world, become all the more urgent, i.e., to push a new agenda of the global Muslim Ummah and invite the rest of the world onto a new trajectory of holistic, integral and **truly sustainable development model** designed and programmed to achieve the primary goal of life as defined by The Creator-Master-Sustainer Himself: goodness-wellbeing in this world as well as goodness-wellbeing in the Hereafter in which there will be true and everlasting happiness (*al-sa`ādah*). In this regard Muslim leaders around the world need to ponder and reflect as to how far they have fulfilled or failed to fulfil their *amānah* and fundamental religious duty as the “custodians of planet Earth” (*khulafā' al-arḍ*) in light of the following Qur'anic message:

And, indeed, after having exhorted [man], We laid it down in all the books of divine wisdom that My righteous servants shall inherit the earth: herein, behold, there is a message for people who [truly] worship God (Q. *al-Anbiyā'* 21:105, 106)

Muhammad Asad explains in his *The Message of the Qur'an* that the statement "My righteous servants shall inherit the earth" is obviously an echo of the promise, "You are bound to rise high if you are (truly) Believers" (3: 139) - the implication being that it is only through faith in God and righteous behaviour on earth that man can reach the heights envisaged for him by his Creator's grace." (Muhammad Asad 1980: 600). In the worldview of the Qur'an, the Earth (*al-arḍ*) being the planet that The Living Creator-Master-Sustainer has placed mankind in, is a necessary phase of existence – a

stepping stone -- for humans to live in and work, on the twin basis of (A) true faith (*īmān*) and (B) righteous work (*amal ṣāliḥ*) a preparation for the everlasting existence in the Hereafter. Hence the divine reminder:

If the people of those communities had but believed (in Allah with true *īmān*) and behaved with piety and God-consciousness (*taqwā*), We would indeed have opened up for them blessings (*barakāt*) out of heaven and earth: but they gave the lie (*kadhhabū*) to the truth - and so We took them to task through what they [themselves] had been doing." (Q. al-A`rāf 7: 96)

As for anyone - be it man or woman - who does righteous deeds, and is a Believer [of true faith], We shall most certainly cause him/her to live a good life (*ḥayāh ṭayyibah*) and, most certainly We shall grant unto such as these their reward in accordance with the best that they ever did. (Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 97)

4. QUR'ANIC CONCEPTUAL EQUIVALENT OF *SEJAHTERA*

Taking into consideration, first, the lexical definition of *sejahtera* in Malaysia and Indonesia, its evolution into a complex nation-building concept in the contemporary world, and, second, the intellectual articulation and reconceptualisation in Prof. Dzulkipli's discourse on *sejahtera* in Malaysian education, sustainable development goals of the UN and leadership in Malaysia's institutions of higher learning for the last two decades, the present writer did a brief survey of the Qur'anic scripture and worldview to decide on the most appropriate Islamic concept which corresponds most adequately to the Islamicised Malay concept of *sejahtera*. We identified the concept of *al-falāḥ* -- an Arabic terminology with wide connotations just like the concept of *sejahtera* in Malay -- as the most appropriate conceptual equivalent of the Islamicised meaning of *sejahtera*. We will explain our rationale for making *al-falāḥ* as the Islamic equivalent to the concept of *sejahtera* in the rest of the paper. It is also proper and timely, in our view, (A) to revisit the concept of *al-falāḥ*, after having written in 1979 a small essay on it, "Nilai-Nilai Universal Islam Tentang Kesejahteraan" (Universal Islamic values concerning social wellbeing), printed by the Religious Education Division, Ministry of Education in 1980, and (B) reemphasise the contemporary relevance of the concept in light of the multiple world crises and the current global pandemic.

In the Qur'an, the word "*Mufliḥūn*" (those who are endowed with *al-falāḥ*) connotes at one and the same time "those who will attain prosperity", "those who will

be truly successful”, “those who will attain happiness” and “those who will achieve the supreme triumph (*al-fauz al-`azīm*) [in the end, in the Hereafter].” (Mahmud Ahmad Mukhlis 2016, https://bfdm.journals.ekb.eg/article_9816_f09d2e8b7f110f55ed70ea88bb5a7424.pdf. Accessed June 3, 2020). In the Qur’an we will come across a variety of attributes of the *Mufliḥūn*. Those attributes can also be construed as various means (*asbāb*) of achieving *al-falāḥ* in the world and in the Hereafter. Let us begin by examining the linguistic meaning of the term.

4.1. The Linguistic and Qur’anic Meanings of Verbs *Falaḥa* and *Aflaḥa*, and Nouns *al-Falāḥ*, *al-Mufliḥūn*

(Given by Arab Lexicographers and Compiled By Edward W. Lane, Followed by the Views of a Few Contemporary Arab Religious Scholars) as Our Justifications and Rationale for Choosing and Highlighting the Concept of *al-Falāḥ*

4.1.1. *Falaḥa*:

He cleaved, split, slit, or cracked (*falaḥa’l-arḍ*: He ploughed the land (to cultivate it)).

4.1.2. *Aflaḥa*:

He prospered; was successful; attained, or acquired, that which he desired or sought, what was good; or felicity, or that whereby he became in a happy or good state. (*Lane’s Lexicon* 1863: 2439)

4.1.3. *Al-FALĀḤ* as having three major connotations:

4.1.3 A. Prosperity, success, the attainment, or acquisition, of that which one desires or seeks, or of that whereby one becomes in a happy and good state;

4.1.3.B. Safety or security;

4.1.3.C. Continuance or permanence, in a good or prosperous state; in the enjoyment of ease, comfort, or the blessings of life; and endurance, lastingness, duration of goodness.

4.1.4. *Qaum Aflāḥ* (same as *Mufliḥūn*):

4.1.4.A. A people prospering;

4.1.4.B. Successful;

4.1.4.C. Attaining or acquiring that which they desire, or seek, or what is good, or that whereby they become in a happy and good state. (*Lane’s Lexicon* 1863: 2439)

4.2. The Uniqueness of the Connotation of *al-Falāḥ* in the Arabic Language.

Arab Lexicographers mention that: “there is not in the language of the Arabs any word more comprehensive in its significations of what is good in the present life and in the final state than *al-Falāḥ*” (*Lane’s Lexicon* 1863: 2439).

It should be known to all Muslims that human beings, including Muslims, have been taught by The Compassionate Creator-Master-Sustainer to make a brief but important supplication as the most popular supplication in the life of Muslims. The Prophet (S.A.W.) also made this *du`ā`* his most frequently recited *du`ā`*:

“*Rabbanā ātinā fi’d-dunyā ḥasanah, wa fi’l-ākhirati ḥasanah wa qinā `adhāba’n-nār*” (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 201) which means, “O our Sustainer-Master, bestow upon us goodness-wellbeing in this world and goodness-wellbeing in the Hereafter and protect us from the torment of the Fire”.)

We would like to mention briefly here that there are many references to *al-falāḥ* and its derivatives in the *ḥadīth* literature but in this introductory essay we wish to concentrate only on the Qur’anic evidences. For example, there is a *ḥadīth* which contains the answer of the Prophet (S.A.W.) to a question by a Bedouin. The Prophet’s answer was “*Aflaḥa in ṣadaqa,*” meaning that “He (the Bedouin) would gain *falāḥ* [alternatively, would enter Paradise] if he were truthful,” i.e. to obey strictly what the Prophet (S.A.W.) advised him to do without adding anything more (*ḥadīth* narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī and *Saḥīḥ* of Muslim). As the primary goal of life for all Muslims, the divinely ordained supplication “*Rabbanā ātinā fi’d-dunyā ḥasanah, wa fi’l-ākhirati ḥasanah wa qinā `adhāba’n-nār*” stresses three important points:

Firstly, the supreme value of holistic goodness-wellbeing as *al-ḥasanah* in this world includes everything that Islam considers good for human beings to have such as economic wellbeing, general prosperity, happiness, good health, holistic education and useful knowledge and skills, good holistic quality of life including safety and security, reasonable material comfort, efficient public transport system, peaceful relations with peoples of other faiths; virtuous spouses and successful children; good and friendly neighbourhood; good governance; a just and transparent system of law and administration; fair and equitable distribution of wealth; and peaceful inter-religious and international relations, etc. etc.

Secondly, it stresses the final destiny of all human beings in life after death and Resurrection, and the desire to attain all that is good and desirable in the Hereafter,

which necessarily includes everlasting happiness and permanent prosperity and wellbeing in *al-Jannah* (Paradise), without forgetting in this world the ways and means of averting the terrible and fearful prospect of eternal damnation and suffering in the fire of *al-Jahannam* (Hell).

Thirdly, it emphasises the necessity of striking the right balance (*al-mīzān*) or equilibrium in fulfilling the legitimate needs of the world and the needs of the next world. The balance is the balance of justice, i.e. “putting things in their proper places,” by giving what is legitimate to worldly as well as otherworldly needs, as stipulated or defined by The Creator-Master-Sustainer, or by human reason which is in harmony with divine revelation, not as defined by the secular, materialistic, agnostic, atheistic, rationalistic or nihilistic worldviews or civilisations.

4.3. The Significance of the Word *Al-Falāḥ* In the *Ādhān* (The Five Daily Call To Prayer).

It should be pointed out that the high religious value and significance of *al-falāḥ* as one of the most important goals in Islam is constantly brought to the attention of all Muslims via the five daily call (*ādhān*) prior to each of the five obligatory prayers to be performed in mosques or *muṣallās*. The choice and inclusion of the word *al-falāḥ* (endorsed by Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) thus indicating divine approval) shows the supreme importance of the concept as the primary goal in the life of Muslims. The call “*Ḥayya `ala’l-falāḥ*” (repeated twice) in the *ādhān* five times a day means “Hasten to that which shall bring you true felicity, prosperity, success and happiness in this world and in the Hereafter (by means of prayer)”. It also means “*Halumma `alā baqā’ al-khair*” which means “Hasten to that which shall bring you permanence of goodness and wellbeing.” If there is any other word in Arabic which is more suitable than *al-falāḥ*, surely it would have been highlighted by Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.), since it will be a permanent part of the Islamic religious ritual.

4.4. The Meaning of “Other-Worldly *Falāḥ*” (*al-Falāḥ al-Ukhrawī*) and “This-Worldly *Falāḥ*” (*al-Falāḥ al-Dunyawī*) according to an Eminent Lexicographer and Qur’anic Exegete *al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī* (d.1108).

He says in his *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān* that:

Al-falāḥ is of two kinds: *dunyawī* (this-worldly) and *ukhrawī* (other-worldly). As for the *dunyawī*, it refers to attainment of a happy state which worldly life makes it pleasant, such as permanence, wealth, fame, while the *ukhrawī al-falāḥ*

constitutes conditions such as permanence without annihilation, wealth without poverty, fame without ignominy, knowledge without ignorance. (<http://www.qaradaghi.com/chapterDetails.aspx?ID=510>. Accessed June 5, 2020)

Aside from pointing to the uniqueness of the meaning and broad semantic field of the term *al-falāḥ*, several Muslim scholars highlight the fact that there are many verses of the Qur'an in which Allah S.W.T. emphasises the granting of *al-falāḥ* as a consequence of man's self-purification efforts (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) as well as performance of several good deeds, and possession of praiseworthy character traits and virtues of the true Believers as detailed in several verses of the Qur'an cited in the next section, 4.5.

4.5. The Relevant Verses of the Qur'an

By examining the relevant verse of the Qur'an, we would be able to understand the islamic values, principles and actions which lead to *al-falāḥ* and the variety of means of achieving this state of **holistic wellbeing-security-success-happiness** which Muslims are supposed to make it as their main goal in their lives on earth:

4.5.1. The expression "*Qad aflaḥa*" (lit. "successful indeed"; or "has/have succeeded/prospered", or "shall attain a happy state", or "will have succeeded") is used to convey the meaning that (a) those Believers of Allah S.W.T. who pay special attention to the purification of their inner self/soul/spiritual heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) from all the corrupting elements, and the ailments of the spiritual heart (*amrāḍ al-qalb*) as a primary and obligatory duty of individual Muslims, would surely attain success/a state of happiness/prosperity. (Q. *al-Shams* 91: 9; *al-A`la* 87: 14).

4.5.2 The term *mufliḥūn* refers to several spiritual-ethical values, virtuous qualities, righteous behaviours and actions of the true Believers such as practicing the principle and value of sincere repentance (*taubah*) to Allah S.W.T. for all sins and wrong-doings on a regular basis. (Q. *al-Nūr* 24: 31; *al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 67)

4.5.3. Acquiring and practicing the values of *īmān* and *`amal ṣāliḥ*, as in the faith and conviction of true Believers (*al-Mu'minūn*), who have the following characteristics:

- 4.5.3.A. Possessing the quality of *khushū`* (spiritual presence, mindfulness and concentration of the heart with full submissiveness) in their prayers;
- 4.5.3.B. Avoidance of indulgence in frivolities and vanities;
- 4.5.3.C. Constancy in the acts of self-purification through charitable contributions to the poor and the needy;
- 4.5.3.D. Guarding and preserving their modesty and sexual integrity;
- 4.5.3.E. Fulfilling all their trusts faithfully and their pledges or promises;
- 4.5.3.F. Strictly guarding their prayers [from all worldly intent or interferences].

Believers with the above qualities and characteristics are promised Paradise by Allah S.W.T. as a reward for their righteous conduct and deeds. The other means or ways to *al-falāḥ* are the following:

4.5.4. Practicing the principle of *al-da`wah bi'l-khair* (inviting people to do all kinds of good and beneficial things and deeds) and *al-amr bi'l-ma`rūf wa'n-nahy `an al-munkar* (enjoining all that is good, right, righteous and acceptable in accordance with the higher objectives of the Divine Way of Life (*maqāṣid al-Shar`ah*) (Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 104).

4.5.5. Striving with one's wealth and selves for the sake of Allah S.W.T. (*al-jihād fī sabīlilLāh bi-amwālihim wa anfusihim*) (Q. *al-Taubah*: 88).

4.5.6. Making sure that their good deeds far outweigh their bad deeds in the worldly life, so that the balancing scale on the Day of Accounting would tilt in favour of good deeds. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 8; *al-Mu'minūn* 23: 102).

4.5.7. Having overcome the covetousness of oneself (*shuhhu'n-nafs*) by preferring to help others in greater needs than oneself (Q. *al-Hashr*, 59: 9; *al-Taghābun* 64: 16).

4.5.8. Obeying Allah S.W.T and the Prophet (S.A.W.) in upholding the *Shar`ah* positively as a characteristic of true Believers. (Q. *al-Nūr* 24: 51).

4.5.9. Being considered as belonging to the Partisans of Allah S.W.T. (*hizbu'LLāh*) as a result of their complete commitment to the cause of Allah and allegiance to the Islamic Community's interests. (Q. *al-Mujādilah* 58: 22)

4.5.10. Helping and spending money on the needy relatives and others in need purely for the sake of Allah (Q. *al-Rūm* 30: 38).

4.5.11. Following the guidance of Allah S.W.T, they are very regular in their prayers and in the conscientious observance of the poor tax (*zakāh*) because of their faith and conviction in life in the Hereafter. (Q. *Luqmān* 31: 5)

4.6. “*La`allakum Tufliḥūn*” (“So That You May Attain *al-Falāh*”)

Another expression which Allah S.W.T. uses in the Qur'an is “*la`allakum tufliḥūn*” (“so that you may attain *al-falāh*”) by following and obeying several commandments of Allah S.W.T. such as:

4.6.1. Not to practice or consume *ribā* (usury, bank interest) out of fear for transgressing Allah's prohibitions. (Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 130)

4.6.2. To persevere in patience and constancy by helping and strengthening one another in the face of adversities while being cautious not to incur the displeasure of Allah S.W.T. (Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 200)

4.6.3. To always be fearing the displeasure of Allah S.W.T. while seeking all kinds of ways and means to come closer to Him and to strive in His cause. (Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 35)

4.6.4. To abstain totally from intoxicants, games of chance and other loathsome allurements of Satan. (Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 90)

4.6.5. To be always cautious and mindful of the displeasures of Allah S.W.T. so as to be able to resist bad things even if they appear to be enticing, especially for “people with sound reason” (*ulu'l-albāb*, among the Believers) (Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 100)

4.6.6. To always remember and extol the blessings, bounties and favours of Allah S.W.T. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 69)

4.6.7. To worship and submit to Allah S.W.T. sincerely and meticulously and to do all the good things as true Believers. (Q. *al-Hajj* 22: 77)

4.6.8. To observe the Divinely imposed restrictions and ethical restraints in inter-gender relations and to always turn in repentance to Allah S.W.T as His true Believers. (Q. *al-Nūr* 24: 31)

4.6.9. To leave the mosque after *Jum`ah* prayer and go forth to seek Allah's bounties through all kinds of legitimate ways -- scientific, economic, entrepreneurial or developmental efforts in the world -- but without forgetting to remember Allah S.W.T. much during those economically driven efforts or activities. (Q. *al-Jumu`ah* 62: 10)

4.7. To make it clear to human beings and the adherents of Islam that certain types of human beings and actions are not at all acceptable

In order to make it clear to human beings and the adherents of Islam that certain types of human beings and actions are not at all acceptable to Allah S.W.T. and therefore will be rejected as irreconcilable with the privileged state of *al-falāḥ*, Allah S.W.T. states that certain types of people and behaviour or action as "*lā yufliḥu...*" ("....will not gain *al-falāḥ*). They are the:

4.7.1. ***al-Zālimūn***: These are wicked and unjust persons – the greatest *ẓulm* or wickedness being shirk (associating partners to Allah S.W.T.-- who invented lies against Allah S.W.T. and rejected His signs, revelations and messages. (Q. *al-An`am* 6: 21, 135; *Yūsuf* 12: 23. *al-Qaṣaṣ* 38: 37)

4.7.2. ***al-Mujrimūn***: These are the sinners, disbelievers, polytheists, criminals and evil doers who are lost in sin, such as forging lies against Allah S.W.T. and denied His signs. (Q. *Yūnus* 10: 17)

4.7.3. ***al-Sāḥirūn***: These are the immoral magicians, who use magic or evil supernatural forces to deceive or induce people into believing in Satanic ways of life, immoral activities, polytheism and all forms of false or deviant beliefs. (Q. *Yūnus* 10:77; *Ṭā Hā* 20: 69).

4.7.4. ***al-Kāfirūn*** : These are the people of *Kufr* (Unbelief) or Disbelievers who reject the tenets of Islam, or who believe in infidelity, false deities or religions (Q. *al-Mu`minūn* 23: 117; *al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 82).

4.7.5. **Alladhīna yaftarūna `ala'llāhi'l-kadhibā** : These are people who attribute their own inventions or falsehoods to Allah S.W.T.(Q. *Yūnus* 10: 69, *al-Nahl* 16: 116).

4.8. Shaikh Dr. Ali al-Qaradāghī, on the Meaning of *al-Falāḥ*.

At this point it is also useful and instructive to know what a contemporary religious scholar has to say on the meaning of *al-falāḥ*, the many ways and means of achieving it in this world and in the next, and the complex nature of *falāḥ*. He is Shaikh Dr. Ali al-Qaradāghī, the current Secretary General of the International Union of Islamic Scholars. He says:

Al-falāḥ in Islam is a concept that has a number of aspects and dimensions. It embraces all the constituents of man and life because it is a comprehensive concept of spiritual, psychological, and physiological happiness. Another way of expressing it is that it is a comprehensive concept of material and moral strengths, covering the external and the inner aspects, as it embraces happiness and achievement in all walks of life – political, economic, social and others...

As for *al-falāḥ* – meaning happiness, success and the enjoyment of all good things—in the context of conventional systems, it is confined to the sphere of the mundane world and does not go beyond it, because death is the end of its reach in their perspectives.....[As such] the means of achieving *al-falāḥ* in the perspective of Islam differs from its means in the perspective of the conventional systems. The means of *al-falāḥ* (*asbāb al-falāḥ*) in the context of the Islamic system consists of two basic parts; the first is linked to the dimension of this-world and made up of [for example] the possession of wealth, comforts, power and establishment. Therefore this aspect of means is subject to the natural laws of Allah The Exalted in this universe and to those which apply in particular to the modes of actualising wealth, comfort, victory and establishment of business, innovation, and adoption of all means of material construction.

The second part is related to the other-worldly and spiritual dimension, and it is embedded in [or confined to] the worship proper of Allah The Exalted, remembrance of Him, gratitude to Him, fearing His displeasure or wrath, constant spiritual surveillance and being fearful of going against His will, and arriving at the closer spiritual degree of witnessing the reality of “that you worship Him as though you see Him; although you do not see Him, know that He sees you.” [well-known *ḥadīth*]. Allah The Exalted has said, “And remember Allah much so that you may gain *al-falāḥ* (*tufliḥūn*)” and “remember the bounties and favours of Allah so that you may gain *al-falāḥ* (*tufliḥūn*).”... The *falāḥ* of the Believer and his/her happiness (consists of) [a] his/her consciousness/feelings of “the good pleasure of Allah The Exalted” (“*bi-riḍā'i'l-lāhi ta`ālā*”) from Him, [b] and [divine] acceptance of his/her repentance in the mundane world, then [c] [entry into] Paradise and the extreme joy of gazing upon His Glorious Countenance – all these in addition to his/her this-worldly happiness

("sa`ādatihī'd-dunyawiyyah")

.....

Al-falāḥ as understood in worldly systems, is confined to the outer aspect (of life) without the inner, to the body and sensual enjoyments without the spiritual. It deals with the sphere of money and politics without relating them to the sphere of the spirit and the transcendent world. Therefore *al-falāḥ* in mundane worldly perspective is (just) external happiness, the happiness of wealth, the happiness of sex and worldly desires, the pleasures of worldly life, the happiness of fame and authority, and the like.

(<http://www.qaradaghi.com/chapterDetails.aspx?ID=510>. Accessed June 5, 2020)

4.9. The views of al-Shaikh `Abd al-`Azīz b. `Abdi'LIāh Āl al-Shaikh

The views of the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and the Head of the Board of Senior Religious Scholars and Administration of Scientific Research and Issuance of Fatwā, al-Shaikh `Abd al-`Azīz b. `Abdi'LIāh Āl al-Shaikh, regarding the means of achieving *al-falāḥ*, are also worth taking into consideration to enrich our understanding of the concept from another contemporary Islamic scholar. In one of his speeches delivered in Saudi Arabia in November 2016, he said that "It is one of the great objectives of Islam is for the Muslim to achieve the state of *al-falāḥ* in this world and in the Hereafter."

This most desirable state, in his opinion, is not to be achieved by wishful thinking, but by firmly grounding faith in the heart and manifesting such faith in righteous acts, as the Prophet (S.A.W.) had instructed. So this *al-falāḥ* cannot be achieved except with (true) faith and good deeds which are the main attributes of people of *taqwā* and guidance from Allah S.W.T. (see Q. *al-Qaṣaṣ* 28: 67; *al-Baqarah* 2: 5). He elaborates the means of achieving it by summarising them as follows"

4.9.1. Affirmation of the absolute oneness of Allah The Exalted in accordance with the saying of the Prophet (S.A.W.): "O people, say [with complete sincerity and conviction] that there is no God/object of worship except Allah, then you will attain *al-falāḥ* (*tufliḥū*).

4.9.2. *Taqwā* of Allah S.W.T. (Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 130).

4.9.3. Goodness and righteousness of the *qalb* (spiritual heart) and purification of the souls (*tazkiyat al-nufus*) from the reprehensible character traits (*al-akhlāq al-radhīlah*) (Q. *al-A`lā* 87: 14; S. *al-Shams* 91: 9).

4.9.4. Repentance and praying in congregation. (Q. *al-Nūr* 24: 31)

4.9.5. Enjoining that which is right/acceptable/righteous and prohibiting that which is wrong/bad/undesirable (*al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'n-nahy`an al-munkar*) (Q. *Āl`Imrān* 3: 104, 110), because it is “a means of securing the safety and security of the Ummah by protecting it from plots/intrigues/machinations/conspiracies (against it) (“*wa šimām amāni`l-ummah yaḥfaduhā min`al-makā`id*”).

4.9.6. Striving in the path of Allah S.W.T. (*al-jihād fī sabīli`Llāh*) (Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 88).

4.9.7. Always thanking Allah S.W.T. for all the favours and bounties He has showered upon human beings. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 69).

4.9.8. Making judgements or dispensing justice in accordance with the Divine Way and Law of Allah S.W.T. (Q. *al-Nūr* 24: 51)

4.9.9. Loving the Believers and befriending them as a sign of love for Allah S.W.T and in Allah (S.W.T.) (Q. *al-Mujādilah* 58: 22).

4.9.10. Spending in the path of Allah S.W.T. without any feeling of stinginess or selfishness. (Q. *al-Hashr* 59: 9; *al-Taghābun* 64: 16).

4.9.11. Being contented with what Allah S.W.T. had decreed to oneself and be pleased with what He has commanded, as mentioned by the Prophet (S.A.W.): “The one who embraces Islam, spends with sufficiency while Allah S.W.T made him contented with what He gave him, will gain *al-falāḥ*.”

4.9.12. Shunning all prohibited things or activities (Q. *al-Mā`idah* 5: 90).

<http://www.alriyadh.com/1547093>. Accessed June 10, 2020)

5. THE LOFTIEST AND ULTIMATE AIM OF TRUE BELIEVERS: SEEKING (IBTIGHĀ') THE GOODLY ACCEPTANCE OR PLEASURE (RIDWĀN / MARḌĀH / RIDĀ) OF ALLAH S.W.T. (IN MALAY: “MENCARI KEREDHAAN ALLAH”)

As many sincere scholars of the Qur'an are aware, there are many promises and assurances given by The Most Compassionate Master and Sustainer Allah S.W.T. to the Believers, including that of *al-falāḥ* by which His faithful servants would be

accorded, in His Paradise, true and lasting success, true and lasting happiness and true and lasting wellbeing, as mentioned above. The scholars are conscious too, that among those blessings or favours reserved for the true Believers, the greatest blessing for them in this world and in the Hereafter is to be the fortunate recipients of Al-Rahman's goodly acceptance or pleasure (*riḍā* / *riḍwān* / *marḍāt Allāh*) after striving sincerely and whole-heartedly "in the cause of Allah [S.W.T.] with their wealth and their selves" (*fī sabīli'LLāhi bi-amwālihim wa-anfusihim*).

This realisation has led several contemporary Muslim scholars and intellectuals to affirm: (1) *al-falāḥ* as the primary goal of personal and societal or civilisational reconstruction (inclusive of Islam-based development efforts); (2) without forgetting that seeking the pleasure, approval and goodly acceptance of Allah S.W.T." (*ibtighā' marḍāti'LLāh* / *riḍwāni'LLāh* / *riḍa'LLāh*) should accompany all Muslims' efforts striving for happiness, prosperity, wellbeing, welfare, peace, stability, success, endurance of goodness, safety or sustainable development. (3) This important spiritual condition and transcendent objective are to be applied primarily at the intention (*niyyah*) stage of the work (*`amal*), then at the stage of utilisation of means (*wasā'il* and *asbāb*) to achieve the objectives, finally at stage of the end, or ultimate purpose or targeted outcome (*ghāyah*, *hadaf*, *gharaḍ*). The Islamic principle of pursuing what constitutes *al-maṣlahah* (public good/welfare/wellbeing), and avoiding or rejecting what constitutes *al-mafsadah* (causing harm, corruption, evil, immorality, destruction), *al-ḥarām* and *al-makrūh* (all within the framework of *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*) is also to be involved in all developmental, reformational, reconstructional or civilisational efforts of Muslims individuals, organisations or governments. This Islamic normative approach which is entirely different from the secular, agnostic or atheistic approaches, is part and parcel of implementation of the Ummatic mission of doing all that which is *khair* (all forms of goodness), *ma`rūf* (all that which is acceptable, desirable, beneficial), *ḥalāl* (permissible, virtuous, right, good and approved) and avoiding all that which is *munkar* (all that which is disapproved, disliked, wrong, bad, evil), *ḥarām* (prohibited) -- is the approach to be adopted and promoted by the Believers with a view of obtaining the ***Riḍwāna'LLāh*** as indicated by the following verses:

5.1. Allah will say to the Truthful:

"This is a day on which the truthful will profit from their truth: theirs are Gardens with rivers flowing beneath their eternal home: Allah well-pleased with them and

they with Allah: that is the great victory (the fulfilment of all desires).(Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 119)

5.2. No People who believe in Allah and the Last Day, will love those who resist Allah and His Messenger.

You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, loving those who resist Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has written faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein (forever). Allah will be well pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Partisans of Allah. Truly it is the Partisans of Allah that will achieve true success-happiness-prosperity. (Q. *al-Mujādilah* 58:22)

5.3. Allah has Promised Believers

Allah has promised to Believers men and women Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein and beautiful mansions in Gardens of Everlasting Bliss. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of God: that is the supreme victory. (Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 72)

5.4. Those who Strive to Gain the Pleasure of Allah

And there is [also] the kind of man who would willingly sell his own self to earn the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is full of kindness towards His servants. (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2 :207)

5.5. The Likeness of Those Who Spend Their Substance Seeking to Please Allah

And the likeness of those who spend their substance seeking to please Allah and to strengthen their souls is as a garden high and fertile: heavy rain falls on it but makes it yield a double increase of harvest and if it receives not heavy rain light moisture suffices it. Allah sees well whatever you do. (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 265)

5.6. Those who Have Believed and Migrated and Strove in Allah's cause

Those who have believed and migrated and strove with might and main in Allah's cause with their properties and their persons have the highest rank in the sight of Allah: They are the people who will triumph [in the end]. Their Sustainer does give them the glad tidings of a mercy from Himself, and of His good pleasure and of gardens for them full of lasting bliss. They will dwell therein forever. Verily with Allah is a mighty reward. (Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 20-22)

We need to mention, at this point, that the blessings of (a) *al-falāḥ* and (b) the *riḍwān* of Allah S.W.T. in this world and in the Hereafter are conferred by the All-Wise Sustainer of the Cosmos only upon those who are considered to be true Believers (*al-Mu'minūn*) in Allah S.W.T. and His teachings, particularly faith in the Hereafter. This indicates that true faith (*īmān*) is the single fundamental prerequisite for the attainment of the two most desirable states of human wellbeing. This fundamental spiritual quality,

in the worldview of the Qur'an or the paradigm of Tauḥīd, must necessarily be complemented by, and manifested in, good deeds (*`amal ṣāliḥ*), righteous works of enduring value (*al-baqiyāt al-ṣāliḥāt*), righteous conduct and praiseworthy character (*makārimu'l-akhlāq / ḥusnu'l-khuluq*). The term *`amal ṣāliḥ* which is inclusive of the principles of "calling for all that is good" (*al-da`wah ila'l-khair*), "enjoining that which is right and good" (*al-amr bi'l-ma`rūf*) and "prohibiting what is wrong and bad" (*al-nahy `an al-munkar*) subsume all those moral virtues and good conduct as well as all the new and future categories and forms of acceptable, beneficial and *Sharī`ah*-compliant policies, actions, activities, institutions or systems.

6. THE VALUES OF *TAQWĀ*, *IḤSĀN* AND *ḤUBBU'LLĀH / MAḤABBATU'LLĀH* IN THE PERSONALITY AND LIFE OF BELIEVERS

In addition to the two fundamental values of *īmān* and *`amal ṣāliḥ*, the Qur'an highlights three additional spiritual-ethical values to complete the wholesomeness and completeness of a true Believer, i.e. the fundamental values of *taqwā* of Allah S.W.T., *iḥsān* and *ḥubb / maḥabbah* (love) of Allah S.W.T. These three spiritual-ethical values are actually the higher and finer degrees of *īmān* and *`amal ṣāliḥ*. The Divine commandment that the fundamental spiritual-ethical value of *taqwā* -- that state of piety and deep consciousness in the spiritual heart (the *qalb*); constant consciousness, mindfulness and vigilance so as not to incur the displeasure (*sakhaṭ*) or wrath (*ghaḍab*) of Allah S.W.T. due to one's actions, behavior or attitudes, while at the same time seeking to earn His *riḍwān / marḍāh / riḍā* -- be infused in all human (including those of Prophets and Messengers), actions, activities, behaviour and relationships, is so pervasive that the word *taqwā* and its derivatives appear more than 250 times in the Qur'an.

Its supreme value in human life, society, culture and civilisation is indicated, for instance, by the statement in the Qur'an that Paradise has been made ready for those with *taqwā* (Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 133); that Allah S.W.T. loves the ***Muttaqīn*** (Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 4, 7); that He is with the ***Muttaqīn*** (Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 36, 123; *al-Baqarah* 2: 194) and that those whose actions and behaviour are imbued or directed by *taqwā* will be given special Divine privileges:

- a) Allah S.W.T. will provide a way out of their problems (Q. *al-Ṭalāq* 65:2),

- b) Allah S.W.T. will make things easy for them (Q. *al-Ṭalāq* 65: 4),
- c) Allah S.W.T. will erase their evil deeds and will magnify His reward for them (Q. *al-Ṭalāq* 65: 5),
- d) Allah S.W.T. will save them from calamities on earth (Q. *Fuṣṣilat* 41: 18; *al-Naml* 27: 53).

Allah S.W.T. expects the *‘ulamā’* (true scholars of Islam, be they specialists in religious sciences or this-worldly sciences), among all His servants to have the have a higher degree of *taqwā*, i.e. the quality and value of *khashyatu’LLāh* (absolute awe of Allah S.W.T. combined with *taqwā*) as stated in the Qur’an: “...*innamā yakshsha’LLāha min ‘ibādihī’l-‘ulamā’, inna’LLāha ‘azīz ghafūr.*” (...Of all His servants, only those who are endowed with knowledge stand truly in awesome fear of Allah, [for they alone comprehend that] Allah indeed is Almighty, Much-Forgiving.) (S. *Fāṭir* 35: 28). True scholars, after all, are “the inheritors of the Prophets” (“*Inna’l-‘ulamā’ warathu’l-anbiyā’...*”, a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Da’ūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān).

Similarly, the value of *iḥsān* (beneficence, benevolence, spiritual-ethical excellence and beauty, treating or caring for people with kindness over and above the limits of justice or legal obligations) is highly regarded and most appreciated by the Beneficent Sustainer (e.g. Q. *al-Nisā’* 4: 36; *al-Isrā’* 17: 23), that He loves the ***Muḥsinūn*** (e.g. Q. *al-Baqarah*: 195; *Āl ‘Imrān* 3: 134, 148, *al-Mā’idah* 5: 13, 93) and commands that Muslims behave with *al-‘adl* (justice) and *al-iḥsān* (Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 90; cf. Q. *al-Ḥujurat* 49: 9; *al-Nisā’* 4: 58). Thus *al-‘adl* and *al-iḥsān* have been identified by many Islamic scholars as the two indispensable and primary characteristics of Islamic governmental, political, economic, social and legal systems and institutions. But it should be remembered by all Muslims that **the highest value or spiritual consciousness in the hierarchy of Islamic spiritual-ethical values** to be inculcated in the personality of Believers is that of ***ḥubbu’LLāh*** (love of Allah S.W.T., ***ḥubbu Rasūli’LLāh*** (love of the Messenger of Allah S.W.T. and ***ḥubbu’l-jihād fi sabīli’LLāh*** (love of striving for the cause of Allah S.W.T.). Hence the personality of true Believers is characterised as consisting, among others, of intense love of Allah (***ashaddu ḥubban li’LLāh***) above everything else (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 165; *al-Taubah* 9: 24, 20-23). As such, the complete true Believer is the sincere and humble servant of Allah S.W.T. who possesses the attributes of ***Islām, Īmān, Taqwā, Iḥsān*** and ***Ḥubb / Maḥabbah*** - all integrated and justly-balanced in his/her personality and life. The fusion and

nurturing of the above five fundamental spiritual-ethical values in his/her soul and life are the most sought-after spiritual endeavour in the life of Muslims. It is with this harmonious fusion or integration of the five intertwined values that makes it easier and enjoyable for them to execute in this world, the multiple Allah-prescribed missions of :

- 1) **`Ibādah** (responsibility of worship and service of the servants of Allah S.W.T. for Him alone as the purpose of they being created by the Compassionate and Merciful Master);
- 2) **Khilāfah** (responsibility of vicegerency of the earth in the name of and in accordance with the Owner and Sustainer of the earth);
- 3) **Tazkiyah** (responsibility of bringing about the sound human and civilizational growth with spiritual purification);
- 4) **Iṣlāḥ** (responsibility of carrying out social, political, economic, cultural, educational and moral reforms, reconstructions, improvements in accordance with the *maqāṣid al-Sharī`ah* and the worldview of *Tauḥīd*);
- 5) **`Umrān / `Imārah** (responsibility of designing, constructing, building, developing and nourishing a virtuous/righteous human society and civilisation), and
- 6) Fulfilment of **Ummah Khairiyyah-Wasaṭiyyah** (responsibility to become the Ummah that represents and manifests the collective qualities of goodness, justice, spiritual-ethical excellence and balance or equilibrium)
- 7) Undertaking all above noble and sacred missions in the spirit of **Raḥmatan li'l-`ālamīn** (responsibility to spread, preach, manifest, act, share and execute the Islamic Prophetic mission of loving mercy, compassion, love and peace to all the worlds – that of mankind, the animal, the plant, the natural and the unseen worlds).

By fulfilling the requirements for *al-falāḥ*, through the many stipulated means (*asbāb al-falāḥ*), the Believer becomes a suitably qualified servant of Allah (S.W.T.) to earn the highest honour and great favour of the Compassionate Master, namely **His riḍwān** (goodly acceptance and pleasure) **in this al-dunyā and in the future al-ākhirah**. As stated by the late Khurram Murad of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, U.K.. “For the Believer, the most coveted goal of life is to seek the good pleasure of Allah and Jannah or Paradise.” (Khurram Murad (1999). Therefore, the well-known motto that Allah S.W.T. teaches in the Qur’an, and which Muslims normally repeat in

the opening supplication (*duā' iffitāh*) at the beginning of their daily prayers, namely: **“Inna ṣalātī wa nusukī wa maḥyāya wa mamātī li’Llāhi Rabbi’l-`Ālamīn. Lā sharīka lahu wa bidhālika umirtu wa ana [awwalu’l-muslimīn] mina’l-muslimīn** [the bracketed phrase is the original in the Qur’an meant for the Prophet (S.A.W.), but replaced in the prayer of every Muslim to represent him/her, not the Prophet (S.A.W.)”

Say: ‘Indeed my prayer, and all my acts of worship, and my living and my dying are for Allah (alone), the Sustainer of all the worlds. No one has a share of His divinity, and thus have I been commanded; and I shall be foremost among those who surrender themselves unto Him. (Q. *al-An`ām* 6: 162-163)

should become the sincere pledge of all true Believers and lovers (*Muhibbūn*) of Allah (S.W.T.) and His Final Messenger (S.A.W.).

7. AL-KHUSRĀN AS THE ANTITHESIS OF AL-FALĀḤ, JUST AS SENGSARA IS THE ANTITHESIS OF SEJAHTERA IN MALAY LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

In order to make it easier for human beings to stay on the right course in the pursuit of *al-falāḥ* in this world and in the Hereafter, the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W.) urge them always to know the right path from the wrong path, the path of God from the path of Satan, and the different positive means to achieve the desirable goal from the negative means that would lead them to perdition, total loss, self-destruction, ignominy or grievous suffering. In the Malay-Indonesian languages, the antithesis of *sejahtera* is *sengsara* (also another word of Sanskrit origin “*samsara*”(lit. wandering/ world/ cyclic change) a deplorable, undesirable state of suffering or wretchedness in material or immaterial senses, or in physical or spiritual dimensions of human existence. The Arabic term that embraces the meaning of loss, doom, suffering, perdition, damage, depravity and corruption is *al-khusrān*, from the root verb of *khasira*, meaning “to incur a loss, suffer damage, to go astray, to perish.” The linguistic meanings of the relevant words are given below:

7.1. Khasira:

He lost or suffered loss or diminution.

He was deceived, cheated, beguiled, or circumvented.

He erred, went astray, deviated from, or lost, or missed, the right way.

He became lost.

He perished, he died.

E.g. “*Khasira`aqlahu, au mālahu* “ (He lost his intellect or his wealth). “*Khasira al-dunyā wa al-ākhirah* (He has lost or loses the things of the present life and

of the latter life)' *Alladhīna khasirū anfusahum wa ahlihim*. (Who shall have lost themselves, or their own souls, and their families, or their wives)

7.2. *Khusrān*:

Loss (in a general sense)
The state of suffering loss
The state of being deceived or cheated
Error or deviation from the right way
The state of becoming lost, of perishing or of dying

7.3. *Khasārah*:

Error or deviation from the right way,
Perdition
Death

7.4. *Khāsir*:

Losing or suffering loss, opposed to raabihah
Erring or going astray
Deviating from, losing
Missing the right way

(*Lane's Lexicon* (1863): 737)

7.5. Looking into the Qur'anic Meaning of *al-Khusrān*

Muslims should take note that Allah S.W.T. had declared in one of the early Makkan verses:

By the Time (which had witnessed through the ages that), Human beings are indeed in a state of grave loss; except for those who have attained (true) faith and do good deeds; and enjoin one another the keeping to Truth, and enjoin one another patience in adversity. (Q. *al-`Aşr* 103: 1-3)

In many other verses, Allah S.W.T. also declares that, despite all the favours He granted them and what He taught mankind regarding the true religion and righteous behaviour, and what His Messengers had repeatedly advised them, "most human beings are ungrateful" (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 243; *Yūsuf* 12: 38; *Ghāfir* 40: 61; etc.), "most human beings do not believe," (Q. *Hūd* 11: 17; *al-Ra`d* 13: 1; *Ghāfir* 59: 21; etc.), "most human beings do not know," (Q. *al-A`raf* 7: 187; *Yūsuf* 12: 21, 40; *al-Nahl* 16: 38; *al-Rūm* 30: 6, 30; *Saba'* 34: 28, 36; etc.) "most of them are rebellious wrong-doers (*fāsiqūn*) (Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 49, 81; *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 16, 26, 27).

7.6. “*Alladhīna khasirū anfusahum*”

The Qur’an refers to a category of human beings described as “*alladhīna khasirū anfusahum*,” (translated as “who have lost their own souls”, or “squandered their own selves” or “who have destroyed themselves”) in several verses:

- 7.6.1. These were the people who refused to believe in the message of Islam although they knew that previous scriptures confirmed the truth about the Final Messenger (S.A.W.) and Islam. (Q. *al-An`ām* 6: 20)
- 7.6.2. These are the people who, on the Day of Judgement, will find that their weight of deeds is light on the Balance, because they have wronged their own souls in worldly life through their indulgence in wrong-doing and evil deeds. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 9; *al-Mu`minūn* 23: 102)
- 7.6.3. These were people who spent their life on earth in rejecting the truth of Islam, beguiled by worldly pleasures and deceptions. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 53)
- 7.6.4. These were people who denied the Hereafter and hindered people who wanted to follow the path of Allah S.W.T. (Q. *Hūd* 11. 21)
- 7.6.5. These are the people who will lose themselves, their kith and kin on the Day of Resurrection due to their rejection of the worship of the One True God; instead they and their relatives stubbornly continued to worship false gods or deities as well other forms of wickedness or injustice (*ẓulm*). (Q. *al-Zumar* 39: 15; *al-Shūrā* 42: 45)

7.7. Human Beings are Bdescribed to “have lost, or squandered themselves”

The situation in which human beings are described to “have lost, or squandered themselves” is part of the tragic phenomenon of *al-khusrān* which is the polar opposite of *al-falāḥ*. Al-Qur’an mentions that the state of *al-Khusrān al-Mubīn* (loss beyond compare) is associated with people of the following qualities:

- a) They lost both this world and the next because of their polytheistic oriented beliefs;
- b) They place their faith and reliance upon other deities beside Allah S.W.T.;
- c) They depended upon false patrons and evil companions (Q. *al-Ḥajj* 22: 11, 12, 13); and
- d) They took Satan as their Patron beside Allah S.W.T. (Q. *al-Nisā’* 4: 119).

7.8. “People of grave loss, doom, perdition and depravity”

As for those people who Allah S.W.T. considers to be “people of grave loss, doom, perdition and depravity” (*al-khāsirūn*), it is useful to know from the Qur’an the causes

which led those people away from *al-falāḥ* into *al-khusrān*. Some of the main causes are as follows:

- 7.8.1. Desiring a religion other Islam. (Q. *Āl `Imrān* 3: 85)
- 7.8.2. Going astray from the straight path due to; a) they rejected the scriptures of Allah S.W.T., then Satan got hold of them; b) then they followed their own base desires (*hawā*), and c) became more determined to give the lie to Allah's scriptures. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 175-178)
- 7.8.3. Breaking the bond with Allah S.W.T.; cutting asunder what Allah S.W.T. had ordered to be joined; spreading corruption or mischief on earth. (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 27)
- 7.8.4. Deliberately denying the truth of Allah's messages after being given the Book (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 121; *al-Zumar* 39: 63)
- 7.8.5. Becoming partisans of Satan (*Ḥizbu'sh-Shaiṭān*) after, after he caused them to forget the remembrance of Allah S.W.T. (Q. *al-Mujādilah* 58: 19)
- 7.8.6. Believers who become oblivious of the remembrance of Allah S.W.T. due to the influence of wealth and children (Q. *al-Munāfiqūn* 63: 9)
- 7.8.7. Believing in falsehood and disbelieving Allah S.W.T. (Q. *al-`Ankabūt* 29: 52).
- 7.8.8. Rejecting belief in true faith (in Allah S.W.T.) resulting in losing all their works in the world. (Q. *al-Mā'idah* 5: 5).
- 7.8.9. Not getting the forgiveness and mercy of Allah S.W.T. after having committed serious sins.(Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 23).
- 7.8.10. Being bent on rejecting the signs/revelations of Allah S.W.T. (Q. *Yūnus* 10: 95).

7.9. The Worst Type of Ultimate Losers

Finally, it is important for all Muslims to know who are the worst type of ultimate losers /the greater losers/ lose the most/ (*al-Akhsarūn*), so that no Muslim or Mu'min would, inadvertently or deliberately, fall into that abject category of miserable (*sengsara*) human beings in the Hereafter:

- 7.9.1. Those who turn others away from the path of Allah S.W.T. and try to make it appear crooked because they refuse to acknowledge the truth of the life to come. (Q. *Hūd* 11: 19-22)
- 7.9.2. Those who will not believe in the life to come –“ behold, goodly have We made their own doings appear unto them, and so they stumble blindly to

and fro. It is they whom the worst of suffering awaits.” (Q. *al-Naml* 27: 4-5)

7.9.3. Those who are described as:

- A. “they whose labour has gone astray in [the pursuit of no more than] this world's life, and who nonetheless think that they are doing good works:
- B. “they who have chosen to deny their Sustainer's messages and the truth that they are destined to meet Him. Hence, all their [good] deeds come to nought, and no weight shall We assign to them on Resurrection Day.
- C. They have “denied the truth and made My messages and My apostles a target of their mockery. (Q. *al-Kahf* 18: 104-108)

8. THE *QALB* (SPIRITUAL HEART) AT THE CENTRE OF HUMAN SOUL, PERSONALITY AND HOLISTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLDVIEW OF THE QUR’AN

With regard to highlighting the central role of the *qalb* in the development and growth of *falāḥ-sejahtera*-oriented human beings in this contemporary world, it is most assuring to hear Prof. Dzulkifli’s speeches or read his recent writings on *sejahtera* leadership or *insan sejahtera* that he does not fail to stress the fact that in Islam, **human beings are essentially spiritual beings** which are wholly integrated with body, heart, soul and intellect. They are also essentially spiritual by virtue of:

- a) having the primordial and pure innate nature of *fiṭrah* created by Allah S.W.T. which is always naturally inclined towards the recognition, submission and worship of Allah S.W.T. (see Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 172 which refers to the primordial covenant (*mīthāq*) between Allah S.W.T. and the human species), and then;
- b) being imbued with a spirit (*rūḥ*) originating from Allah S.W.T. and being forever pure and inclined towards The Creator. Prof. Dzulkifli also reiterates the need to give primary attention to the spiritual dimension of man or development in which the *qalb* plays the key role, contrary to the dominant secular perspective which focuses on the mind, not the spiritual soul or the spiritual heart, because of the bipolarity and separation of soul and mind. In fact, ever since he promoted the concept of *Qalb*-Based Leadership in AKEPT’s training programmes for university leaders during the last decade,

he has always referred to the *qalb* as the core entity of the *Insan Sejahtera* or the *Qalb*-driven Leader.

In this paper we have alluded several times above that true faith and good deeds are the two basic foundations for *al-falāḥ* as well as the attainment of *riḍwāna'LLāh*, and they are also the prerequisites for entrance into Allah's Jannah. The attributes and primary values of true Believers such as *īmān*, *taqwā*, *iḥsān*, *ḥubbu'LLāh*, looking forward to meeting Allah S.W.T. in the Hereafter or to be given the great favour of being able to gaze upon the supremely majestic beauty of Allah's Glorious Countenance (*wajhu'LLāh*), the willingness to die for the sake of Allah S.W.T., and the spiritual-emotional joy of performing all kinds of supererogatory devotions for the pleasure of Allah S.W.T., all proceed from the *qalb* (spiritual heart) of the Believers. The ability to resist the temptations of *matā` al-ḥayāt al-dunyā* (worldly pleasures and enjoyments) or the pressures of *hawā* (base desires) or the *waswasah* (whisperings, devilish insinuation) of Satan or the selfish inclinations of the ego via the negative and reprehensible emotions of envy, jealousy, ostentation or desire for human appreciation or praise (among what the Muslim spiritual doctors call *amrāḍ al-qalb*, diseases of the spiritual heart) – is a reflection of the spiritual-ethical quality of the *qalb* at the centre of the human soul, personality and identity.

The *qalb* is the most critical spiritual organ of human beings because if it is purified and becomes healthy and sound, it can receive the light of divine knowledge, guidance and wisdom, and with those spiritual resources, lead human personalities to *al-falāḥ*, *al-Jannah* and *riḍwān* of Allah S.W.T. But if it is diseased, corrupted or afflicted with all kinds of spiritual and moral ailments, then it will lead human beings to all kinds of *al-khusrān* and misery in this world and in the Hereafter. For that reason, the task of cleansing, purifying, polishing, protecting and elevating the *qalb* has been made a fundamental religious duty by Islamic spiritual savants and scholars upon all Muslims, and the inner struggle to control and dominate the passion (*hawā*) and the lower soul that incites to evil (*al-nafs al-ammārah bi's-sū'*) is known as *jihād al-nafs* which is regarded by most Islamic scholars as "The Greater *Jihād* " (*al-jihād al-akbar*).

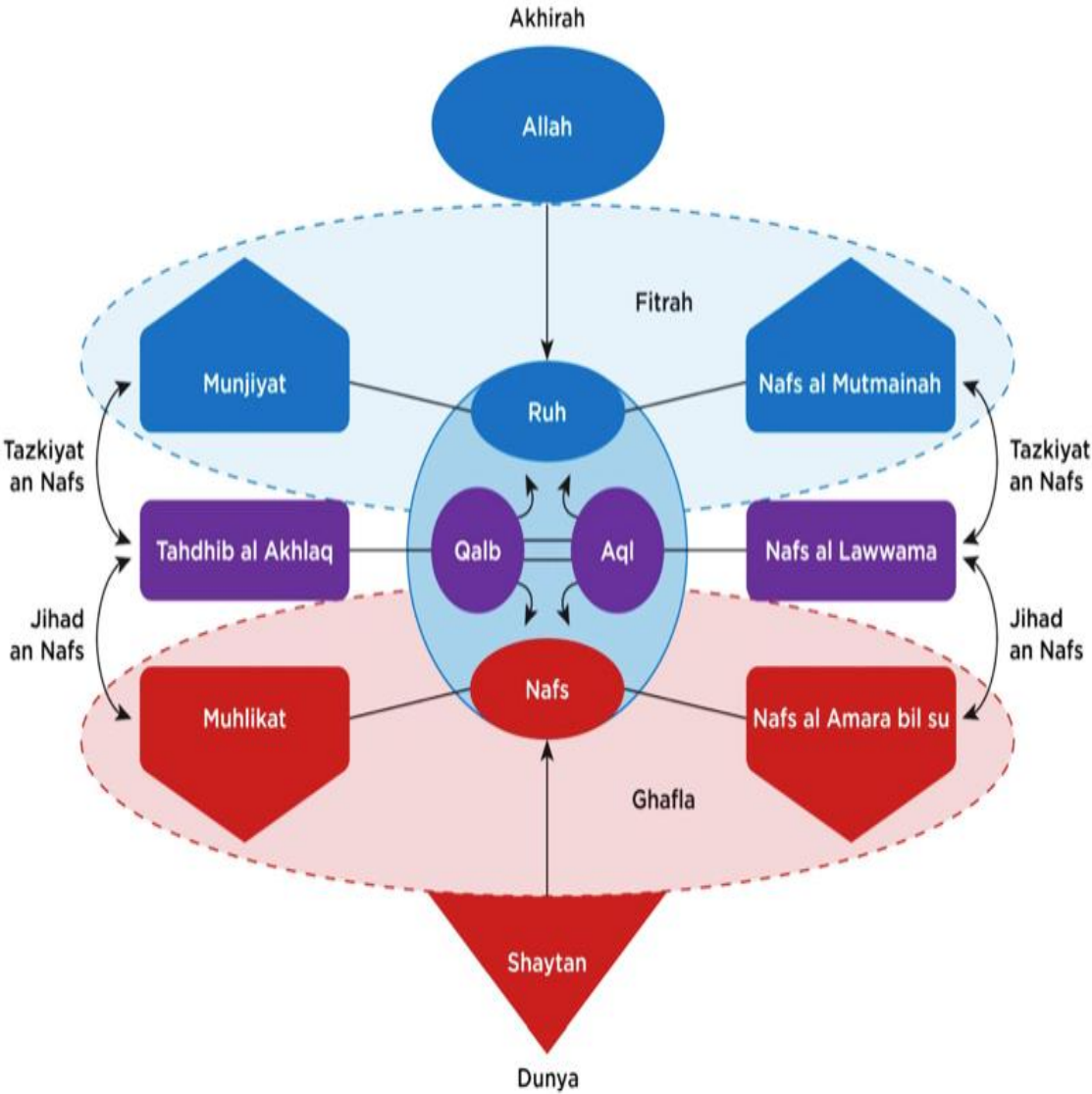
We would only highlight in this essay, the basic Islamic understanding of the rational-intuitive capacity of the *qalb* which forms the *fiṭrah*-infused spiritual foundation for the wellbeing, happiness, safety, wholesome and holistic development of societies and civilisations. In this understanding, it is the *qalb* that truly loves Allah S.W.T., the

Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) and striving for good humanistic or ecological causes purely for gaining the favours and goodly pleasure of Allah S.W.T. When the *qalb* is enlightened by the light of revealed knowledge and wisdom, spiritual-ethical integrity, *ihsān* and *taqwā*, it becomes highly resistant, resilient and effective to withstand and overcome all the subtle means, impulses and devices used by Satanic, capitalistic, materialistic, political or business forces or agents in the country to corrupt the Muslim leaders, politicians, bureaucrats or law-enforcement officers. The hearts of the Believers which produce the good and influential attitudes and righteous behaviour from the soul may be classified in the following types:

- 8.1. Allah-fearing, afraid and apprehensive of Allah's displeasure as reflected in: Q. *al-Anfāl* 8: 2; *al-Ḥajj* 22: 35; *al-Mu'minūn* 23: 57-60;
- 8.2. Tranquil, patient and vigilant as reflected in: Q. *al-Ra'd* 13: 28; Q. *al-Naḥl* 16: 106; Q. *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 124-126, 200;
- 8.3. Sound, healthy, purified as reflected in: Q. *al-Ḥijr* 15: 47; *al-Shu'arā'* 26: 87, 88, 89; *al-Hashr* 59: 10; *al-Mā'idah* 5: 41;
- 8.4. Having *taqwā*, *wara'* (reticent piety) and *ṣalāḥ* (virtue) as reflected in: Q. *al-Ḥajj* 22: 32; *al-Ḥujurāt* 49: 3;
- 8.5. Soft, gentle and merriful as reflected in: Q. *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 27; *al-Taubah* 9: 128; *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 159; *al-Zumar* 39: 23;
- 8.6. Intimate, loving and brotherly as reflected in: Q. *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 103; *al-Anfāl*: 62, 63;
- 8.7. Guided by Allah S.W.T., conscientious, wide awake as reflected in: Q. *al-Taghābun* 64: 11; *al-Mujādilah* 58: 22;

Those positive and desirable qualities of the Believers' hearts were and are being developed, nourished and refined through proper and systematic processes of (a) correct spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah*), (b) character discipline and refinement (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*), purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and (c) various aspects of *mujāhadah* (systematic measures taken to control, purify or refine the lower soul) which are meant to control and keep in check the base desires and passions (*ahwā'*, plural of *hawā'*). The role of the sound *īmān*-based intellect (*al-'aql*) which is the cognitive and reasoning faculty of the spiritual heart in assisting it to make right and wise decisions

is very crucial. A full Islamic understanding of the soul that explains the reality of the complex nature of the soul and the proper relationship of the four elements of the soul, namely 1) *rūḥ* (spirit), 2) *qalb* (spiritual heart), 3) *ʿaql* (intellect), and 4) *nafs* (lower self) can be read from al-Ghazali’s *Book of Knowledge* and *Marvels of the Heart*, but an excellent Islamic model of soul has been developed recently by Dr. Abdullah Rothman, a contemporary Muslim psychologist who is associated with the Cambridge Muslim College programme on “Midnight Moments” of the last Ramadhan. The diagram he developed is as follows:



Source: Dr. Abdullah Rothman, “An Islamic model of the soul”, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=wm&ogbl#inbox?projector=1>. Accessed June 1, 2020)

He gives the following summary of his presentation as follows:

Table 1: Theoretical Categories and Subcategories

Main categories and Subcategories	
1.	Nature of the Soul [<i>al-Nafs</i>]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Concept of <i>Fiṭrah</i> ✓ <i>Fiṭrah</i> exists underneath the projected Self ✓ Being out of alignment with <i>Fiṭrah</i> ✓ <i>Dunyā</i> as distraction ✓ <i>Fiṭrah</i> as internal compass—realignment
2.	Structure of the Soul
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Distinct features of the Soul ✓ Soul as whole—integrated nature of the Soul ✓ <i>Nafs</i> (lower self), <i>Qalb</i> (heart), <i>ʿAql</i> (intellect), <i>Rūḥ</i> (spirit)
3.	Stages of the Soul
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Changing nature/fluctuation of the <i>Nafs</i> ✓ <i>al-Nafs al-Ammārah bi's-Sū'</i> [the soul that incites and commands the human personality to that which is bad/evil/reprehensible, to be rebellious] ✓ <i>al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah</i> [the blaming soul that reminds, cautions or warns the human personality to refrain or repent from bad/evil deeds] ✓ <i>al-Nafs al-Muṭma'innah</i> [the soul at peace, having achieved inner tranquility, success in subduing or controlling the lower self and desires or Satanic impulses, and focussing towards the good pleasure of Allah S.W.T.]
4.	Development of the Soul: The human project of [self-development and self-purification]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Tazkiyat an-nafs</i> (purification of the soul) ✓ <i>Jihād an-nafs</i> (struggle of the soul) ✓ <i>Tahdhīb al-akhlāq</i> (refinement of character) ✓ Need for moral reform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) [Struggle against] <i>Muhlakat</i> [or spiritually destructive elements, qualities, thought, ideas, emotions, behaviour, character traits] and; (2) [Struggle to acquire, internalise and practice several spiritual-ethical virtues. These are the <i>Munjiyāt</i> or values and virtues which will save the human personality from spiritual corruption, degradation and ultimate destruction].

Dr. Abdullah Rothman explains:

According to this model, the human soul has an innately pure and good nature, *fitrah*, that comes from and is connected to God but that becomes covered over and forgotten as a natural part of life in the *dunya*. Throughout its life in the *dunya*, within the soul, there exists a dynamic interplay of conflicting forces that affect the psychological state of the person and determine relative levels of alignment or misalignment with *fitrah* (this process is represented by the purple elements in the middle of the model).

He elaborates:

.....The *qalb*, which is the spiritual center of the person, and where the faculty of intellect is located as the *aql*, has the potential to turn in either of two directions which shapes the relative, transient outcome of this conflict. It can turn toward the lower impulses of the *nafs* and become further misaligned with *fitrah* by the influences of the *dunya* and *shaytan*, resulting in increased negative characteristics of the *muhlikat* and a state of *ghaflah*, (this process is represented by the red elements toward the bottom half of the model). Or it can turn toward the higher, Godly nature of the *ruh* with the remembrance of Allah and the *akhirah*, resulting in increased positive characteristics of the *munjiyat*, and come more in alignment with the soul's state of *fitrah* (this process is represented by the blue elements toward the top half of the model).

Dr. Abdullah emphasises the importance of cleaning the *qalb* thus:

The work of self-improvement or personal development is the work of constantly staying engaged in the effort to uncover the blocks on the heart, essentially cleaning the heart, and striving and struggling to stay in remembrance of Allah amidst the distractions and downward pulls of the *dunya*. One aspect of the structure of our souls that can help us in this struggle is the *`aql*, which can be conceived of as the cognitive function, but which is a more Divinely connected kind of reasoning.

His explanation on the *`aql* as the cognitive/intellection function of the *qalb* is very important for Muslims to understand, in light of what we said above:

In the Islamic model of the soul, the *`aql* is not understood as the central driving aspect of the self but is actually better understood as a function of the *qalb*. In addition to the normal kind of logical reasoning that we attribute to the mind, the *qalb* has the ability to perceive and to see things as they are. The form of the word *`aql* that is used in the Qur'an is an active verb *ya`qilūna* and it is used as a descriptor of a function of the *qalb*, so that the heart has the ability to perceive. It is in using this ability to perceive that the *qalb* possesses that we can effectively turn our hearts away from the veils of the *dunya* which result in a state of *ghaflah*, and turn it toward Allah and the *akhirah*, accessing through the point of Divine connection within us, the *rūh*.

(Rothman, A., Coyle(2018).<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0651->.Accessed June 10, 2020.)

Since the spiritual heart also occupies a central position in the worldview of many world religions or religious philosophies, and the worldview of the Qur'an underscores the necessity of every Believer to carry out the personal responsibility of (a) cleaning or purifying the soul (*tazkiyatu'n-nafs*) and (b) the key role to be played by the hearts of the Believers (*qulūb al-mu'minīn*) in the construction of virtuous societies and *khairiyyah-wasa'iyyah* based cultures, societies and civilisations driven by the Prophetic mission of *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn*, it is the important that we Muslims have a good understanding of the "hearts of the Believers" ("*qulūb al-mu'minīn*" in the Qur'an) as opposed to the the hearts of the hard-core materialists, the self-deluded hypocrites, the arrogant disbelievers, the defiant atheists, or the unrepentent sinners. The hearts of the Believers are hearts which get illuminated by the light (*nūr*) of Divine guidance, wisdom and intuition. Informed and nurtured by the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, these hearts inspire, motivate, strengthen and spur the Believers to greater heights of spiritual-ethical development and progress, against the tide and forces of disbelief, polytheism, corruption, anarchy, depravity, immorality, falsehood, nihilism, atheism, individualism, racism, and secularism.

The sound *īmān*-based reasoning faculty of this type of *qalb* leads the Believers as the *Ulu'l-Albāb* (possessors of sound intellects) to explore as well the beneficial Signs of Allah S.W.T in the heavens and the Earth and in the human selves in order to harness the Allah-given resources for the purpose of developing and flourishing (*istikhlāf, `imārah*) sound and virtuous human civilisational progress on Allah's planet Earth. Thus, their scientific and technological explorations, investigations, research and usufruct of the Allah-given (not Nature-given) bounties are forever imbued with the spirit of *tawādu`* (humility) and *shukr* (gratitude) to the Benevolent Sustainer. Their scientific and technological activities are a form of *dhikru'LLāh* (remembrance of the Benevolent Sustainer). They have in their hearts the fear (*al-khauf* and *al-khashyah*) that any wrong doings or transgressions on their part would lead them to the ignominy (*khizy*), eternal suffering and punishment (*`adhāb*) in Hell. (Q. *Āl-`Imrān* 3: 190-194, and 15 other verses containing the words *ulu'l-albāb*)

The *qalb* as the Allah-gifted spiritual entity (al-Imām al-Ghazali calls it "*laṭīfah rabbāniyyah rūḥāniyyah*" - a subtle spiritual entity of Divine origin) is of immense worldly and other-worldly value which we Muslims and fellow human beings need always to preserve, protect and purify from all kinds of corrupting elements, and remove all the

“stains” or “rusts” of our bad deeds and bad influence of the lower self, the *hawā* and the *al-nafs al-ammārah bi’s-sū’* that incites to disobedience against religious norms and rules, immoral acts and evil deeds.

It is important to note that Allah S.W.T. mentions in several verses of the Qur’an that human hearts are susceptible to spiritual diseases, or moral ailments, by saying: “in their hearts is a disease” (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 10; *al-Ma’idah* 5: 52; *al-Anfal* 8: 49; *al-Muddaththir* 74: 31) and similar verses which have been analysed in many Sufi works. The heart as a dynamic spiritual core of human personality can therefore be “healthy” (Q. *al-Shu`arā’* 26: 88-89); be “tested” (Q. *al-Hujurāt* 49: 3); be “blind” (Q. *al-Hajj* 22: 46); be “hard”, (al-Hajj 22: 53); be “locked” or “full of rust” (Q. *al-Muṭaffifīn* 83: 14; *al-Baqarah* 2: 7); “follow the whispers” of Satan (Q. *al-An`ām* 6: 113) or be “without understanding” (*al-Anfāl* 8: 24).

We would like to reiterate here that the *qalb* -- despite being prone either to spiritual diseases or to the highest states of spiritual purity and perfection -- is the only spiritual organ Allah S.W.T. created in man which has several functions and faculties, including the spiritual, the emotional/affective, the intuitive, the meditative, the imaginative, the rational/intellectual or the cognitive. The uniqueness of the *qalb* that is not known even to many Muslims, let alone the non-Muslims. Knowing this unique nature of the *qalb* would help Muslim educators, leaders and parents to give proper attention to the holistic growth, development and elevation of the *qalb*.

(1) The first thing to know is that Allah S.W.T. does not use the word *`aql* (intellect, intelligence, reason) as a noun in the Qur’an, although it exists in the Arabic language. Rather The All-Knowing, The All-Wise Creator-Sustainer uses the verbs “*ya`qilūn*” (they understand, comprehend or they reason), “*na`qilu*” (we understand, we use our reason) and “*yafqahūn*” (they understand, comprehend) as actions and functions of the *qalb*. The following verse needs to be studied:

A) Have they not travelled through the earth, and have hearts [*qulūb*] by which they could reason/gain wisdom or understanding [*ya`qilūn*], and ears by which they could hear? For indeed, it is not their eyes that have become blind but it is the hearts [*qulūb*] that are in their breasts that have become blind! (Q. *al-Hajj* 22: 46)

The explanation given by Abdullah Yusuf Ali on the Qur’anic meaning of *qalb* is most enlightening:

The word for "heart" [*qalb*] in Arabic speech imports both the seat of intelligent faculties and understanding as well as the seat of affections and emotions. Those who reject Allah's Message may have their physical eyes and ears, but their hearts are blind and deaf. If their faculties of understanding were active, would they not see the Signs of Allah's Providence and Allah's Wrath in nature around them and in the cities and ruins if they travel intelligently? (Abdullah Yusuf Ali 1999: 964)

B) And certainly many are the invisible beings and humans We have made for hell who have hearts [*qulūb*] with which they understand not [*lā yafqahūna bihā*] (or fail to grasp the truth), and eyes with which they fail to see [*lā yubṣirūna bihā*], and ears with which they fail to hear [*lā yasma`ūna bihā*]. They are like cattle - no, they are [even] more misguided: it is they, they who are the [truly] heedless [of warnings]! (Q. *al-A`raf* 7: 179).

On the above verse, Abdullah Yusuf Ali says that "Though they have apparently all the faculties of reason and perception, they have so deadened them that those faculties do not work, and they go headlong into Hell. They are, as it were, made for Hell." (Abdullah Yusuf Ali 1999: 459)

As a consequence of human beings's intelleletual arrogance, stubbornness and persistent rejection of the Truths that divine scriptures have revealed, their hearts became impervious to divine guidance and deserved to be "sealed" as Allah S.W.T. says: "their hearts were stamped so they do not understand/comprehend" (Q. *al-Taubah* 9: 87; S. *al-Munāfiqūn* 63: 3) and "Allah stamped their hearts so they do not know (have knowledge)" (Q. *Taubah* 9: 93).

(2) This is the second important thing we need to know about the *qalb*: that all the cognitive, intellecting and reasoning functions as well as the affective, the intuitive and the imaginative are done by faculties of the same *qalb*, not by a separate entity called *`aql*. That being the case, our discourses or programmes of self, organisational or leadership transformation which presumes a proper understanding of the Islamic conception of the *qalb* within the human personality – a conception that is different from the Western, atheistic, agnostic, and secular humanistic conceptions – ought to take note of this fact so that we shall not continue to follow, uncritically, the secular Western perception of the dualism and dichotomy of heart/soul and mind/intellect, of an inherent conflict between reason and revelation, or between the heart and the mind.

- (3) The third important finding, i.e. that the rational and cognitive intelligence constitutes an organic part of the *qalb* is crucial for educated people to readily accept the Islamic notion of *īmān*-rooted nature of the intellect and reason known as *`aql* in Arabic. This embeddedness of natural spiritual inclination to the Divine Creator-Sustainer, in the uncorrupted pristine nature of human reason having innate faith in Him -- like the *fiṭrah* and *rūḥ* -- in human personality, was designed and created by none other than the All-Knowing, All-Wise Creator HIMSELF. That is why in Islam and throughout the Islamic knowledge-triumphant civilisation there is no conflict between Reason and Revelation and reason is always given the role of verifying or validating the truths and supremacy of divinely revealed knowledge. It is also the reason why divine revelation only takes care of providing fundamental knowledge and truths of *Tauḥīd*; of the realities of *`Ālam al-Ghaib* (the realm of Transcendence, and other forms of realities beyond the ken of human reason); the certainty of future realities of *Dār al-Ākhirah* and how to prepare for it in this temporal world; divine perennial wisdom; general guidelines for the life of true believers as contrasted with the ways of falsehood, *kufir*, and Satanic deceptions; fundamental principles of human, societal and civilisational development; immutable Laws; moral spiritual lessons with Prophetic precedents towards achieving spiritual-ethical excellence of *taqwā*, *iḥsān* and *ḥubbu'LLāh* – all of which are beyond the ken of human reason. As for the details on how best to develop – in the context of dynamic and constantly changing socio-cultural and socio-politico-economic environments -- the nitty gritty of material, technological, institutional developments, they are left to (the pristine divinely-inclined) human reason, logical thinking, collective or individual *ijtihād*: independent reasoning based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah to solve problems or provide good answers or good solutions to new issues, new problems or emerging/anticipated problems not addressed by divine revelation or Prophetic wisdom.
- (4) The fourth finding is that the efficacy, supremacy, desirability and indispensability of this faith-based reasoning and thinking as propounded by the Qur'an and the Sunnah was manifested and demonstrated throughout human history;

- 4.1. most brilliantly in the Prophetic intellection, reasoning, argumentation and thinking, in human history, as Messengers of Allah S.W.T. engaged head-on the bold challenges, defiant opposition and ruthless persecution of evil polytheistic, *kufr*, materialistic and other *Tauḥīd*-rejecting forces;
- 4.2 by “the people of knowledge” (*‘ulamā’* in Q. *Fāṭir* 35: 28); by “those endowed with innate knowledge” (*alladhīna ūtu’l-‘ilm* as in Q. *al-Ḥajj* 22: 54; *al-Rūm* 30: 56; *al-Naḥl* 16: 27); by “those firmly rooted in knowledge” (*al-rāsikhūna bi’l-‘ilm* as in Q. *Āl ‘Imrān* 3: 7; *al-Nisā’* 4: 162); and by the “the possessors of sound intellect” (*ulu’l-albāb* as in Q. *Āl ‘Imrān* 3: 190-194; *al-Baqarah* 2: 269; *al-Mā’idah* 5 :100; *al-Zumar* 39: 18; *Ṣād* 38: 29).

Is it any wonder then that Allah S.W.T. foresaw and then described the narrowly skewed nature of secularised human knowledge of modern post-Enlightenment civilisation as being confined only to what could be perceived or conveyed by the senses or secularised science, namely the external, tangible and perceivable material realities, as indicated in the following verses (as translated by Muhammad Asad in his *The Message of the Qur’an*):

[This is] God's promise. Never does God fail to fulfil His promise - but most people know [it] not: (30:7) they know but the outer surface [*zāhiran*] of this world's life, whereas of the ultimate things they are utterly unaware [*ghāfilūn*]. (30:8) Have they never learned to think for themselves? God has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them without [an inner] truth and a term set [by Him]: and yet, behold, there are many people who stubbornly deny the truth that they are destined to meet their Sustainer! (Q. *al-Rūm* 30: 6 - 8).

This appears, in our humble opinion, to be a severe divine critique, if not indictment, as well, of the dominant but flawed secularised way of thinking, as manifested in scientism or in rationalistic analysis of post-modern contemporary civilisation, even among Muslim elites and in mainstream Muslim institutions. The secular and dominant civilisation built upon secularised science, technology, social sciences and humanities, fundamentally negate divine revelation (*al-waḥy*) as a source of knowledge and marginalised the truths and wisdom presented by it.

Therefore it is expected of knowledgeable Muslim scholars and intellectuals to present or counter-propose to the secularised non-Muslim or even Muslim elites the Islamic perspectives on true progress, true wellbeing, true safety and security, true sustainability, true success, true prosperity and true happiness which are all contained

in the Qur'anic vision of *falāḥ-sejahtera* conception of life and civilisation. However, the Qur'an gives the advice that as far as engaging with non-Muslim intellectuals or scholars is concerned, it is better not to spend too much time trying to persuade those hard-core, persistent, fanatical or irrational rejectors of Islamic perspectives. Those who are innocently ignorant about Islam or genuinely open to peaceful and respectful inter-religious dialogue would probably be more tolerant to understand, at least, if not appreciate the alternative paradigm of sustainable development that the Qur'an offers. In this connection, we would like first to quote from Muhammad Asad's *The Message of the Qur'an* the following verses:

Therefore, avoid those who turn away from all remembrance of Us and desire nothing but the life of this world. (29) That is to them the only thing worth knowing [alternatively: "That is their sum-total of knowledge", or "This is as far as their knowledge will take them"]. Indeed, your Sustainer is fully aware as to who has strayed from His Path, and He knows best those who follow His guidance. (30) Indeed, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth: and so He will reward those who do evil in accordance with what they did, and will reward those who do good with ultimate good. (31) As for those who avoid the [truly] grave sins and shameful deeds even though they may sometimes stumble, know that your Sustainer is abounding in forgiveness...." (32) (Q. *al-Najm* 53: 29-32).

Abdullah Yusuf Ali's commentary on verse 30 above is as follows:

Men with a materialist turn of mind, whose desires are bounded by...material things, will not go beyond those things. Their knowledge will be limited to the narrow circle in which their thoughts move. The spiritual world is beyond their ken. While persons with a spiritual outlook, even though they may fail again and again in attaining their full ideals, are on the right Path. They are willing to receive guidance and Allah's Grace will find them out and help them. (Abdullah Yusuf Ali 1999: 1640)

Another beneficial commentary is given by Abu'l A`la Maududi:

...[Y]ou should not waste your time in making him [the one who turns away from remembering God] understand the truth, for such a person will never be inclined to accept any invitation which is based on Godworship, which calls to objects and values higher than the material benefits of the world, and according to which the real aim of life may be the eternal success and well-being of the Hereafter. Instead of spending your time and energy on such a materialistic and ungodly person, you should devote attention to the people who are inclined to heed the remembrance of Allah and are not involved in the worship of the world....[As]

these people neither know nor can think anything beyond the world and its immediate gains; therefore, it is futile merely to spend time and energy on them. (Abu'l A`la Maududi(2006). <https://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=53&verse=26&to=32>. Accessed June 20, 2020)

Now we come to a very important matter related to the inner spiritual struggle (*jihādu'n-nafs, tazkiyatu'n-nafs*) of human beings to reach the goal of *al-falāḥ* and avert the destination of *al-khusrān*, which is rarely discussed in mainstream intellectual discourses or mainstream leadership training modules; i.e. the disruptive role of an unseen (like the Coronavirus) "PERPETUAL VIRUS" in human life, culture and civilisation coming from highly intelligent but invisible Forces of Evil which have the ability to do, among other things, the following:

- a) Camouflage or disguise what is *munkar* as *ma`rūf*, *khusrān* as *falāḥ*, falsehood (*bāṭil*) as truth (*ḥaqq*), vice (*radhīlah*) as virtue (*faḍīlah*), misery as blessing, poison as honey, or divine wrath as divine pleasure;
- b) Convert the less educated Muslim masses or confused Muslim youth, students or young professionals to believe in polytheistic supernatural forces, or to become followers of hedonism, neo-liberalism or neo-atheism;
- c) Lead Muslim traditional rulers, political leaders (including Prime ministers, Ministers, and Members of Parliament), policy makers, business and industry players, senior civil servants, law enforcement (including the judiciary) and immigration officers, to be involved in practices of cheating, fraud, scandalous deals, corruption of all kinds, abuse of authority, cronyism, collusion, favouritism and cronyism.
- d) Make Muslims believe that since Allah S.W.T. is All-Merciful and All-Forgiving, Muslims can afford to indulge in some kinds of *munkar* or sinful acts, because they would eventually be forgiven by their Compassionate and Merciful Master. They could also plan to perform *Hajj* or *Umrah* in the distant future when they would make the necessary *taubah* (repentance) sincerely with all their hearts, and seek forgiveness most of the time while performing pilgrimage, as a *Hajj* that is accepted (*mabrūr*) by Allah S.W.T. would absolve them of all their sins.
- e) Instil and develop in young Muslim personalities or middle-age professionals or government servants, the popular Malay expression of

“*tidak apa*” “Ok lah”, thus reflecting the attitudes or mindsets of complacency, laxity, mediocrity, irresponsibility as well as the tendency to procrastinate or to defer doing good deeds, including acts of seeking divine forgiveness (*istighfār*), *taubah* or *Hajj* to a much later date in one’s life. In the meantime, it should be quite O.K., they think, to “make hay while the sun shines”.

- f) Inject into the mind and psyche of Muslims the idea-- later to become a firm conviction, that there is no need to worry too much about the Hereafter; instead Muslims should concentrate on achieving progress in their worldly life so as to be on par, if not better, than the Western standards of living, by imitating or adopting their models, systems or theories. Thus they will be told something like this:

“What really matters are your good deeds, your great contributions for the economic or scientific progress of the society or the country, just like the Western scientists and technologists who may not be religious, pious or not even believing in God. Yet you cannot deny the great and beneficial contributions of their scientific work and results. Since God is a fair, merciful, kind, forgiving and just God, surely the useful and beneficial deeds and products of those dedicated, sincere and sacrificing Muslim professionals, leaders, scientists, doctors, engineers and experts – even if they do not observe for a long time all the fundamental religious responsibilities of a Muslim, such as prayer, *zakāh*, fasting in Ramadhan and performance of *Hajj* – surely all those positive contributions carry a lot of weight on the Day of Judgement as compared to the work of pious, mosque-going lecturer or teacher who has not contributed much to the economic, technological advancement or material wellbeing of society.”

The above examples of some of the flawed reasonings used by the unseen Forces of Evil which operate outside and inside of the human soul are but simple illustrations of what *Iblīs* and *Shaitān*/Satan are capable of doing. In fact they are capable of conjuring much more lethal, yet subtle, techniques or stratagems to lead Muslims and others astray from the path of the true Believers, the path that would lead to true goodness and *falāḥ-sejahtera* conditions in the world and true happiness and *falāḥ-sejahtera* conditions in the Hereafter. Adult Muslims, including religious scholars,

intellectuals and followers of Sufi *ṭarīqahs* can certainly learn more about the subtle techniques of *Shaiṭān* from the chapter on “Condemnation of Deception” (*Dhamm al-Ghurūr* in Book 3) of al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ `Ulūm al-Dīn* in order to be better prepared to avert the deadly spiritual diseases of pride and arrogance, desire for human adoration or appreciation, and the deadliest disease in the form of self-admiration or conceit (*`ujb*), which is considered to be a form of hidden *shirk* – associating things other than Allah S.W.T. as an object of worship.

The avowed aim of the Open Enemies is to take all human beings, if they could, along with them onto the outwardly attractive, appealing and seductive trajectories of human, societal or civilisational development which are designed to lead humans into the deep chasms of *khusrān-sengsara* miseries in life on earth and life after death. Therefore we need to study and understand profoundly some relevant verses of the Qur’an regarding our antagonistic relationship with the unseen evil force. Allah S.W.T. declares that Satan is an *`Aduwwun Mubīn* (An Open Enemy) in the following verse:

MANKIND! Partake of what is lawful and good on earth, and follow not Satan's footsteps: for, verily, he is your open foe [*`aduwwun mubīn*] and he bids you only to do evil, and to commit deeds of abomination, and to attribute unto God something of which you have no knowledge. (Q. *al-Baqarah* 2: 168-169)

Let us now look at those verses which reveal (a) the historical background of the fatal disobedient act of *Iblīs* which prompted him to plan for the vindictive spiritual destruction of the human species until the Day of Resurrection, (b) what he and his armies have decided to do to spread their mischievous influence among mankind with the permission given by Allah S.W.T. and (c) what Allah S.W.T. had said upon hearing the evil strategies proposed by *Iblīs*:

And We have certainly created you [O mankind] and given you [human] form. Then We said unto the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam!" - whereupon they [all] prostrated themselves, except for *Iblīs*: he was not of those who prostrated. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 11)

[And God] said: "What has prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" Answered [*Iblīs*]: "I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas You have created him out of clay." (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 12)

In *Sūrah al-Isrā’* (17) verse 62, *Iblīs* added:

Tell me, is this [foolish being, Adam] the one whom You have exalted above me? Indeed, if You will but allow me a respite till the Day of Resurrection, I shall

most certainly cause his descendants - all but a few - to obey me blindly! (Q. *al-Isrā'* 17: 62)

[God] said: "Descend then from this [Paradise] - for it is not for you to show arrogance here! So go out, then: indeed, you are of the debased!" (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 13)

[Iblis] said: "Grant me a respite till the Day when all shall be raised from the dead." (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 14) [And God] replied: "Indeed you shall be among those who are granted a respite." (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7:15) [Whereupon Iblis] said: "Now that You have sent me astray, I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Your straight path. (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7:16) Then I shall most certainly fall upon them from before them and from behind them [openly as well as in a manner beyond their ability to understand], and from their right and from their left: and You will not find most of them grateful to [You]." (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7:17)

In verse 42 of *Sūrah al-Hijr* (15) Allah S.W.T. assures that

"Indeed, you shall have no power over My creatures - unless it be those who are [already] lost in grievous error and follow you [of their own will]" (Q. *al-Hijr* 15: 42).

This means that although Allah S.W.T. has given the permission to Iblīs and his army to tempt human beings and cause havoc inter-human relations, they would have no power to seduce those who are truly conscious of God. It would also appear from Allah's responses in the dialogue that despite Iblīs ostensible rebellion against his Creator, he and *Shaitān* would play a role of "the eternal tempter who enables man to exercise his God-given freedom of choice between good and evil and, thus, to become a being endowed with moral free will." (Muhammad Asad 1980: 463).

[And God] said: "Go out from here, disgraced and disowned! [And] as for those among them who follow you - I will most certainly fill hell with all of you! (Q. *al-A`rāf* 7: 18).

Verse 64 of *Sūrah al-Isrā'* (17) provides an additional statement by Allah S.W.T. :

[God said] Entice, then, with your voice such of them as you can, and bear upon them with all your horses and all your men, and be their partner in [all sins relating to] worldly goods and children, and hold out [all kinds of] promises to them: and [they will not know that] whatever Satan promises them is but meant to delude the mind. (Q. *al-Isrā'* 17:64)

Allah S.W.T. gives His assurance by saying: "[And yet,] behold, thou shalt have no power over [such of] My servants [as place their trust in Me]:for none is as worthy of trust as thy Sustainer." (Q. *al-Isrā'* 17:65)

In another verse *Iblīs* openly reveals, at this point, his mischievous plan:

I shall indeed make [all that is evil] on earth seem goodly to them, and shall most certainly beguile them - into grievous error – (Q. *al-Hijr* 15: 39)

But, Iblīs did mention an exception as follows:

[I will beguile all], Except those among them, who are Your sincere servants!" (Q. *al-Hijr* 15:40),

meaning that there would be, among human beings, “those who are so deeply conscious of Allah S.W.T. that no "blandishment of Satan" can lead them astray”. (Muhammad Asad 1980: 462)

In order to know more about this ever-present, pervasive and spiritually-ethically destructive influences of the strategems of Iblīs and Satan, it would be useful for leaders of the Muslim community to be able to benefit from the insights and wisdom of our foremost spiritual masters and savants, such as al-Imām al-Ghazālī (1058/1059-1111 C.E.) particularly in his *Min `ajā'ib al-Qalb* (Marvels of the Heart) in which he describes in detail the eleven great gates or doors through which Satan enters the *qalb* of human beings (al-Ghazālī 2007: 106-135); Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (1292–1350 C.E.) in his *Ighāthat al-Lahfān min Maṣā'id al-Shaiṭān* (Aid for the Yearning One in Resisting Satan) and in *Talbīs Iblīs* (Deceit of Iblis) of Ibn al-Jauzī (1116-1201 C.E.). They have taken great pains to write important ground-breaking treatises to educate Muslims masses as well as scholars on the lures, seductions, delusions, deceptions, traps and machinations, manufactured by Satans to deceive all kinds of human beings, in order to distance them from obedience to Allah S.W.T. and make them sin against God or become their followers or slaves.

9. CONCLUSION: POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE PURSUIT OF *AL-FALĀḤ--SEJAHTERA* IN THE MUSLIM WORLD, AND ITS CONNECTION WITH THE NEWLY INTRODUCED “VISION 2077” OF IIUM

9.1. The Tribulations of the Global Pandemic of COVID-19

Having to live and suffer under the tribulations of the current unprecedented global pandemic of COVID-19, humanity and the Muslim Ummah might unknowingly be on the threshold of a radically changed world post COVID-19 crisis that many economists, scientists, doctors, thinkers, intellectuals, international institutions and religious scholars are forecasting, predicting and speculating. What kind of “New

World Disorder(s)” would emerge and would those disorders or upheavals be a prelude to the much-debated collapse of the dominant secular, agnostic or atheistic civilisations imminent? is difficult to prognosticate, but as long as there is no consensus on what humanity really needs to do together to sustain the planet Earth and the environment, the Muslim communities around the world has to do a lot of soul-searching or *muḥāsabah* (self-introspection). (An imaginary collapse of Western civilisation is found in Naomi Oreskes & Erik M. Conway 2014.)

Priority and immediate attention will have to be given to strengthening Muslim countries’ medical and health-care systems and revision of their economic, political, governmental and educational priorities to overcome the pandemic and to avert future ones. But for its medium and long-term objectives, they have to learn how to internationalise and institutionalise the Qur’anic systems, principles and values of *al-falāḥ* (interpreted as the Islamicised meaning of *sejahtera* to achieve the state of holistic wellbeing, success and happiness in this world and in the Hereafter) in its societies, governance, economies, cultures and civilisation. In doing so it should aim at avoiding falling into the pain, suffering and humiliation of *al-khusrān* (grave loss in this world and in the Hereafter) or aspects of the Malay concept of *sengsara* (the antithesis of *sejahtera*) which we will elaborate in a section of this paper below.

Nevertheless, irrespective of how the world is going to look like, in our view, the devastating COVID-19 pandemic has a positive revolutionary lesson. For many Tauhidic thinking and *falāḥ*-pursuing Muslims, irrespective of whether the pandemic has zoonotic or human experimental origins, COVID-19 virus which has been creating havoc and chaos around the world, can be interpreted as a stern reminder from the transcendent realm of The Creator-Master-Sustainer to those heedless and intellectually arrogant nations or world powers that there is a Transcendent Power Who actually rules over the world and the whole Cosmos, but the large majority of human beings has ignored The Sustainer or His authority, even as the United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. It is ironic but highly significant that the whole official narrative of sustainability has apparently been premised upon unspoken philosophies of naturalism and secular humanism which make no reference whatsoever to the Transcendent Creator, Owner, Controller and Sustainer, because in both philosophies the universe is perceived as operating purely on natural laws, as all metaphysical, transnatural, or religious explanations are

excluded or discounted. Just as modern secularised science aims at understanding the world of nature without reference to the Originator, Provider and Sustainer of the Cosmos, in the same way Sustainable Development Agenda of the UN aims at protecting and preserving the Planet, the People and Prosperity, without acknowledging the existence or sovereignty of The Living Sustainer of the Planet, The Absolute Master of Human Beings and The Generous Provider of all the natural resources Who designed them all to be subservient to the needs of His chosen Custodians. Perhaps Covid-19 virus has inadvertently exploded the futility and pretensions of “Sustainability without The Sustainer.” The pandemic has exposed and punctured the fragile and unsustainable structures of dominant world systems and secular ideologies; the heartless greed of capitalism; the impotency of the United Nations and the hypocrisy of the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation); the corruption, arrogance and immorality of Western democracy; the hegemonic ambitions of totalitarian systems; the enslavement of scientific research institutions in the U.S. to the materialistic goals of giant heartless corporations; the shameful double-standards, incompetencies, endemic corruption and disgraceful disunity in the Muslim world; the deceptions, delusions and bankruptcy of late modernity or postmodernity; and the spiritual-ethical impoverishment of neo-liberal and commodified education systems, including in contemporary Muslim countries.

Undergoing the chaos brought about by the pandemic, the majority of Muslim countries – with few exceptions, including the highly privileged classes of affluent and prosperous individuals – would seem to be going further into a future of uncertainty. Conditions of this-worldly or mundane *al-khusrān* or *sengsara* for the overwhelming masses seem to constitute the current scenarios. If we take the cue from the Qur’anic statement that:

“*Al-fasād* (conditions of mischief, moral depravity -- including economic or political turmoil, oppression and instability -- and widespread corruption, fraud and abuse of power) has appeared on land and at sea because of what humans have caused by their own hands, that He may let them taste [the evil of] some of their doings, so that they might return [to the right path]” (Q. *al-Rūm* 30: 41),

then the right path for humanity – certainly for Muslim nations, communities, organisations and individuals – is to embark upon the trajectory of holistic wellbeing and growth that leads to *falāḥ-sejahtera* conditions or circumstances in this world and in the Hereafter for the Muslim nations, at least.

9.2. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals

With respect to the massive programmes on Sustainable Development Goals which were launched at the historic UN Summit of 2015, the global disruption of COVID-19 pandemic will most likely cause many of the goals to be reformulated and time-frames revised. In our humble opinion, even without the disastrous pandemic, the well-defined and generally acceptable -- though somewhat ambitious -- goals of sustainable development as officially defined by the UN will not be realisable as long as:

- (A) The existence, the ownership, the sovereignty, and the will of the Living, the Seeing and Compassionate Sustainer of the world and mankind are not recognised, and not constituting the philosophical assumption and foundation upon which the narratives of SDGs are based; and
- (B) As long as human beings, societies and nations are not accountable to The Creator-Master-Sustainer for all their actions and fasād-producing systems and activities. Without this metaphysical foundation and without the ultimate accountability to The Sustainer of the world, or the deep consciousness of spiritual-ethical responsibility to an Authority higher than human beings, nation-states and the impotent United Nations, we sincerely feel that it is not improbable that the world forces of materialistic greed, hegemonic powers, heartless capitalism, aggressive neo-atheism, expansionist and arrogant Zionism, dictatorial and centralised political systems, nihilistic and hedonistic youth cultures, nationalistic egoism and selfishness, neo-fascism, racial arrogance, corporate hypocrisy, and religious militancy and radicalism would try to assert their respective agenda in a potentially more troubled, turbulent, chaotic and fractious world, post COVID-19 pandemic. *Wa'LLāhu a`lam.*

In accordance with several intelligent and credible international forecasts prior to the eruption of the pandemic, followed by the largely pessimistic socio-economic predictions of international organisations and research bodies – during the last five months of the COVID-19 pandemic – many countries in the world economy and general world conditions in the next two to three years, would be experiencing recession, if not depression, and the scenarios of global shortage of food, clean water and carbon emission-free energy as well as serious environmental catastrophes in

several countries or regions of an imperilled and sick planet Earth would become become more depressing in the decades ahead. We would assume that Muslim nations, communities and organisations too will be confronting – within the next decade or more -- very challenging future scenarios which might include “the unthought” disruptions, “wild cards”, “black swans” or “black jelly-fishes”, to borrow the well-known metaphors of scholars of futures studies. (see Ziauddin Sardar 2019: 121-172, Sohail Inayatullah 2018)

In order to plan, prepare and produce the requisite and relevant human talents and new skills, with better psychological, intellectual, emotional, moral, spiritual, natural or technological resources to meet what Ziauddin Sardar calls radically changed “postnormal times” (PNT) and, hopefully, to be able to negotiate cautiously but wisely the uncertain, complex, contradicting, chaotic or even “wicked” realities of the future -- domestically as well as regionally or globally -- Muslim leaders in different sectors of national life will have to go back soon to the drawing board and chart out a new roadmap with revised strategies to move forward, collectively and systematically, to a better or more preferred future of Islam and the Ummah before or at the advent of the next *Hijriyyah* century, the year 1500 *Hijrah* (in November 28, 2076, *in shā’ Allāh* (if Allah wills). This is an urgent national and ummatic task as the roadmaps and strategic planning blueprints, painstakingly produced in the last two decades, may have been rendered obsolete or irrelevant because of the COVID-19 global “*tsunam*” and its disruptive repercussions in human societies.

The tragedy of COVID-19 marks a topsy-turvey start to the third decade of the 21st century: it is in our view a powerful wake-up call for humanity and the Muslim countries to seriously consider a new paradigm of holistic human and environmental development as well as civilisational wellbeing. For Muslim nation states, the pandemic opens up a rare once-in-a-century-opportunity to finally abandon the culture of aping or unmindful adoption of the secular Western models of progress, development, modernity and happiness. They badly need to rediscover, revitalise and publicly implement the traditional and indigenous God-given model of *al-falāḥ* which will prevent them from the misery, the *sengsara*-producing life of worldly *al-khusrān* complemented by the materialistic deceptions (*al-ghurūr*) of fleeting enjoinder of sensate and profane life-styles (*matā` al-ḥayāh al-dunyā*) which The Compassionate Creator-Master-Sustainer has been warning against these influential deceptions in

many verses of the Qur'an. (Q. *al-An`ām* 6:70, 130; *al-A`rāf* 7: 51; *Luqṣmān* 31: 33; *Fāṭir* 35: 5; *al-Ḥadīd* 57: 20; *Āl-`Imrān* 3: 197). Pertaining to the tendency of many Muslims to be seduced by the outward show of worldly progress of disbelievers, it is useful for Believers to be reminded by the following divine advice given to the Prophet (S.A.W.):

- Hence, bear with patience whatever they [who deny the truth] may say, and extol your Sustainer's limitless glory and praise Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and extol His glory, too, during some of the hours of the night as well as during the hours of the day, so that you might attain to happiness.
- And never turn your eyes [with longing] towards whatever splendour of this world's life We may have allowed so many others to enjoy in order that We might test them thereby: for the sustenance which thy Sustainer provides [for you] is better and more enduring. (Q. *Ṭā Hā* 20: 130 – 131)

The above verses and the one immediately below this convey the divine instruction that the ability to distinguish between worldly comforts that are spiritually acceptable and those opulent splendours which are not acceptable because they actually are meant to test the moral fibre of the owners, should become part of the spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence of contemporary Muslim elites and leaders.

- Turn not your eyes [longingly] towards the worldly benefits which We have granted unto some of those [that deny the truth]. And neither grieve over those [who refuse to heed you], but spread the wings of your tenderness over the Believers. (Q. *al-Ḥijr* 15: 88).

Adherents of Islam are also taught by The Creator-Master-Sustainer not to be easily deceived by what is normally projected by the deniers of God's favours, or by claims made by those who do not believe in the ultimate accountability in the Hereafter, that their actions in this world are really virtuous deeds, whereas the opposite is the case. They may not realise that they are the greatest losers (*al-akhsarūn*) in human society.

Say: "Shall we tell you who are the greatest losers in whatever they may do? "[It is] they whose labour has gone astray in [the pursuit of no more than] this world's life, and who none the less think that they are doing good works: It is they who have chosen to deny their Sustainer's messages and the truth that they are destined to meet Him." Hence, all their [good] deeds come to nothing, and no weight shall We assign to them on Resurrection Day. (Q. *al-Kahf* 18: 103-105)

9.3. IIUM'S VISION-2077.

Coinciding with the opening up of a momentous historic opportunity by the COVID-19 pandemic for Muslims the world over to plan for a better future of the Muslim ummah, we in IIUM felt in 2019 that IIUM should take the lead among all Malaysian institutions of higher learning to seriously plan for "A New *Hijrah*" of the Muslim ummah in Malaysia -- a holistic migration of the whole ummah from:

9.3.(A) The terrible past of colonisation, followed by post-Independence decades of false promises of modernisation, parliamentary democracy, globalisation; the shameful intra-ethnic political divisions and disunity of the Malay-Muslim population until today and;

9.3.(B) The present scenario of worrisome widespread moral corruption of Malay political leaders and senior civil servants, together with Muslim political disintegration amidst destabilising economic crisis and political turbulence, while the destructive and embarrassing social ills of the younger generation of Malay-Muslims continue to rise.

Notwithstanding the reformative or transformational efforts to be undertaken in other Muslim countries towards resolving their present and future problems upto the year 2050 C.E. (the year that seems to be the furthest that many countries or organisations are prepared to plan for), our target is, in fact, beyond 2050. For at least three reasons, we decided on the year 2077 C.E.:

9.3. (B)(1). By the 28th of November 2067, *in shā' Allāh*, Malaysia would enter the 16th century *Hijriyyah* (1500 A.H.), while we dream for, and envision, a much better future scenario of the Muslim ummah at that time or by the year 2080, six decades from today;

9.3.(B)(2). We feel most disillusioned with the state of the Muslim world 41 years since the advent of the new Islamic century in 1979. We are also distressed by the deep Malaysian socio-political crisis and the widening internal divisions of the Muslim community. Therefore we in Malaysia do not wish to see the repeat of the mistakes of the Muslim ummah on the eve of the advent of the 15th century *Hijriyyah* (November 1979 C.E.), i.e., how the leaders of the ummah failed to come up with credible futuristic plans which would be systematically,

scientifically, collectively, and realistically designed. Looking back at the Muslim world from Morocco to Malaysia, particularly at the political and economic instabilities and military conflicts in West Asia after the Iranian Revolution of 1979, we witnessed with grave concern the destabilising factors within the body politic of the Muslim ummah. The Muslim world was badly shaken by the U.S. unjustified invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the dominant hegemonic influence it imposed on many West Asian countries. The brutality of Zionist Israeli expansionism supported by the U.S. and its allies have been creating havoc upon the increasingly oppressed Palestinian communities. The bloody and inhumane civil-wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Yemen -- together with the structural weaknesses of the O.I.C only serve to create more hardships, turmoil, disillusionment, disgrace, chaos, and inhumane cruelties in the region while the devastation of Syria, the dismal failure of the "Arab Spring", the hypocrisy and double standards of affluent Arab regimes and the unending socio-political conflicts and economic crises in Muslim countries have turned the Muslim world into a pitiful, if not humiliating, and embarrassing section of the human family.

If we add on to this deplorable phenomenon of Muslim disintegration and paralysis, the unending inter-ethnic and inter-sectarian violence, the rising tide of Islamophobia in the West, India and some regions of China, Russia and Southeast Asia, coupled with white supremacist trends and neo-Fascist xenophobic fervour to curb Muslim presence in Europe and to foil attempts by Muslim refugees to seek political refuge or asylum in European countries, the global Muslim ummah appears to have the worst of existential crises since the advent of the 15th century Hijriyyah 41 years ago.

9.3.(B)(3).We, in the ASEAN region, look forward to more promising future scenarios of Islam and Muslims from Muslim Southeast Asian communities of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Mindanao in Southern Philippines, Kampuchea, Thailand and Vietnam, although we are appalled by the deplorable conditions of the Rohingya community rendered stateless by the unjust policies of the military-dominated and anti-Islamic militancy of a radical Buddhist clerical group of Myanmar. As academic and administrative staff of IIUM, we are realistically optimistic that Malaysia of the next six decades upto

2080 would witness a more favourable and desirable future of the Muslim ummah, because the potentials for positive developments are present in the ummah of Malaysia, although currently the political disunity and polarisation of the Malay Muslim community is most embarrassing and disconcerting. Hence we came up with a long-term futuristic project of IIUM called VISION 2077 in September 2019. Having formed 13 IIUM scenario-planning cum research clusters, our futuristic planning, forecasting, foresight, scenario planning and creative imaginations are going to be guided and illuminated by the vision, mission and objectives of the Islamic Ummah as provided by The Creator-Master-Sustainer, Allah S.W.T. in His *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. We need to fulfil the permanent Qur'anic Vision of the Best Ummah (*Khair Ummah*) produced for mankind, based upon the Principles of Justice, Spiritual-Moral Excellence and Balance as the Middle-Most Community (*Ummah Wasaṭ*) in order to become Witnesses for Mankind (*Shuhadā' `ala'n-Nās*). Its mission is Calling People to Goodness, Enjoining all that is Right and Virtuous, Prohibiting all that is Wrong, Bad, Unjust, Disapproved and Reprehensible. This noble and divinely prescribed mission shall be operationalised and manifested in light of the Prophetic mission of “*Wa mā arsalnāka illa Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn.*” (We have not sent you [O Muhammad] except as a Mercy to all the worlds (Q. *al-Anbiyā'* 21: 107).

In accordance with the guidance, vision and mission that Allah S.W.T. has given to the Universal Ummah, we would certainly hope that the developmental and civilisational growth and progress of the Malaysian Muslim Ummah in Malaysia and abroad -- all the way to 2077 and beyond -- shall be in harmony with various means towards achieving *al-falāḥ* and avoiding the misfortunes and miseries of *al-khusrān* as we have discussed in detail above. For that purpose we would like to focus our futuristic strategic thinking and scenario planning on the key success factor:- the emergence of a new generation of Malaysian Muslim leaders to provide the most desirable and appropriate leadership for the necessary transformation (*iṣlāḥ*, *tajdīd* and *taḥwīl*) in the fields of politics, economics, business, industry, professions, lower education, higher education, governance, ICT, media, diplomacy, public administration, judiciary, etc. We envisage that the new breed of ummatic leadership in Malaysian context would possess, at least, the following attributes: a) Professional competency, b) *Taqwā-*

based and *qalb*-driven, c) Deep ummatic consciousness and orientation, d) Possessing the values of integrity, humility, sincerity, accountability to Allah S.W.T. and transnational network defined by Islamic solidarity and brotherhood, with patriotism to the nation of Malaysia, and e) Respect, compassion, tolerance and merciful attitudes towards non-Muslim neighbours, colleagues, co-citizens guided by the Prophetic-Ummatic mission of *Rahmatan li'l-`Ālamīn*.

Our future 2077 plans would have to cover six time-horizons or phases of future development, to coincide with the decades of (1) 2020-2030, (2) 2030-2040, (3) 2040-2050, (4) 2050-2060, (5) 2060-2070, (6) 2070-2080. However, given the very long time horizon, and major constraints within IIUM, we might decide to give more attention mainly, if not only, to the 1st Phase of 2020-2030 decade, given the severe limitations of time, data, expertise and financial resources. We could still spell out in general terms our narratives of desirable and preferred future scenarios for the rest of five phases in light of changing Malaysian socio-political contexts. But we will leave the substantial work of writing the suitable narrative for each of the next five phases to the future groups or clusters in IIUM to undertake the responsibility. The respective future groups coming after Phase One would be given the liberty to revise, correct, refine, expand or modify the earlier-conceived general narratives covering emerging trends, key drivers, or projected obstacles as well as key success factors, in light of the data available to them and the emerging trends and realities existing or manifesting in their respective time-space and ecosystems. The ultimate goals which are derived from the Qur'anic imperatives to be achieved in 2077 will have to remain constant as far as general principles and values are concerned, while the details have to be adapted to the Malaysian contexts. These Islamic goals may appear to be idealistic because they are derived from the ideals of Islam but they are not utopian. Our outlook is one of practical optimism. While the clusters are working and developing their respective future scenarios, we intend to have an internal IIUM Symposium in December 2020 whereby all the 13 clusters would be sitting together to exchange ideas, share common interests or problems, towards improving the respective narratives and consolidating them into a single coherent rational General Plan of IIUM's Vision 2077 which would be published as a single publication, by the grace of Allah S.W.T.

9.3.(C) As this project is a collective trans-kulliyah futuristic knowledge-cum-scenario construction of IIUM, we would be working and collaborating with several

relevant authorities, kulliyahs, departments, centres and institutes in IIUM. However, we may also seek the participation of relevant domain experts or consultants in Malaysia or from overseas as we go forward from January 2021. In the end, we earnestly seek the *`ināyah* (kind attention and care), *barakāt* (blessings) and *riḍwān* (good approval / pleasure) of Allah *subḥānahū wa ta`ālā* for our humble and imperfect efforts which we take up sincerely for His sake and for the sake of actualising a *falāḥ-sejahtera*-oriented Malaysian Islamic Ummah. It will be led by *qalb salīm* (sound-hearted) leadership with integrated, holistic and balanced personalities required for the major civilisational transformation in Malaysia and beyond by 2077 and into the new 16th century *Hijriyyah*. *Āmīn!*

إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ ۚ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۗ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

“...I desire no more than to achieve (sound) reform (of society) in so far as it lies within my power; but the achievement of my aim depends on Allah alone. In Him I have placed my trust, and unto Him do I always turn!” (Q. *Hūd* 11: 88)

Wa’Llāhu’l-Musta`ān

(...And it is unto Allah (alone) that I pray to give me strength....)

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